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THE HERITAGE OF MAN

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POEMS ABOUT BIRDS
DOGS, BIRDS AND OTHERS
SANCTUARIES FOR BIRDS

THE HERITAGE OF MAN

BY

H. J. MASSINGHAM



JONATHAN CAPE
THIRTY BEDFORD SQUARE
LONDON



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To
PAMELA

The greater portion of this volume has not been previously published in any journal. I owe my thanks to the editors of the *Architects' Journal*, *Harper's Magazine*, Mr. J. A. Hammerton's *Encyclopædia*, *The Criterion*, *The English Review*, *Psyche*, *The International Educational Society*, *The Saturday Review* and *The Manchester Guardian* for permission to reprint the remainder.

Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts?

KING LEAR

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INTRODUCTION

A WORD is necessary as to the arrangement of these essays, for their titles bear the appearance of being a random collection. But my object, however plodded for, is unity of impression in diversity of theme. Thus the opening essay, 'The Heritage of Nature,' introduces the reader to a wide range of problems affecting the relationship of natural to human life, of primitive to civilized man, of man himself to his social environment, and of the past to the present. Highly specialized in function as is our age, life is not to be thus docketed. Nature is largely man-made to-day, but man, for all his absurd attempts to get out of it, remains the child of Nature. They just have to be taken together.

An essay on the 'moral' constitution of Nature is itself a record of human opinion. If Nature is not cruel or warlike, whence arose such familiar presences in our midst as war and cruelty? Were they acquired or inherited? What were we human beings like in the natural state? The only way to answer that question is to plunge into anthropology. In what respect do civilized men differ from uncivilized? What have we lost to civilization and what have we gained from it? If we are very different as civilized beings from what we used to be as natural men, what is the nature of the interplay between man as a human being and the

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external fabric of his laws, customs, institutions and social inheritance?

In writing this book, alpha and omega thus confronted me at every turn. The landscape opened up was of such appalling vastitude and complexity that there was no way of getting on terms with it but by taking certain themes and trying to illustrate through them – first, how this trinity between Nature, man and social environment works in them; and, second, what values emerge from these interrelations.

This, surely, need not imply that I am attempting to outline a philosophy of life. The cargo of this boat's long voyages is a belief not in the humanities (for I don't quite know what they mean), but in the individual human being as Nature has made him and civilization ought to complete him: with his feet on the earth, his heart loving beauty and truth and his mind seeking from sod to star for the meaning of reality.

Blake and Keats were the ones who really knew, I think. Neither Blake nor Keats were simple men, but the advantage of this belief is that the simple are as good citizens of this kingdom as the visionary and the complex, Schubert as Beethoven, and a faithful heart as either. Over there is a man sitting under a tree with one he loves, birds drifting in the branches overhead. Perhaps his eyes are fixed on the landscape of the past, trying to see what it all means, not as an abstract problem, but as a means to living the 'good life,' and perhaps he finds his answer not in his sizzling, synthesizing brain, but in his arm round her shoulder. Or let him be thinking of just nothing at all. Still he is the

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heir of all the ages, and his humanity is a light to lighten our darkness. And so is that old man smoking his pipe in the sun outside the pub, and the ploughman and all the men and women who preserve or struggle to preserve or use to the greater glory of life that drop of human elixir which is their birthright.

So E. M. Forster was right when he wrote: 'The personal life is the only thing for ever and ever'; Ruskin was right when he measured prosperity in terms of human life; Christ was right when He said, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is within you,' 'the Sabbath was made for man,' and 'where your heart is, there is your treasure also'; Blake was right when he wrote 'The Proverbs of Hell,' which were much more important than any thing that ever came out of Sinai; and Gautama was right when he opposed individual truth to dogmatic tradition, the sense of community to class divisions, inquiry to authority, the actualities of life to systems, and the spirit from within to the machinery of externals.

The validity and endorsement of this wisdom lie in the study of primitive society, the bedrock of human nature, and the reactions between man and the institutions of his civilization. So we come back to anthropology, Nature and the rest. Except for a few playthings inserted to lighten the day's work, but bearing upon the general theme (though I can't quite explain how), these essays are a plea against a background of historical fact for the human and natural elements of life, so cruelly handicapped by false theory both in the past and the present, issuing either in the form of ideas divorced from their proper context or externalized in the social

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fabric. The Buddhist doctrine of causality, ball games and their past, human love, megalithic England, the ancient sanctity of wells, what is the meaning of degeneration, the new school of diffusion in anthropological thought, the 'morals' of Nature — these and the rest of this rag-bag of themes, what relevance have they to such a plea? They are, to my mind, so many different windows to the same room. Each child comes forward to say its lesson, dark and fair, stupid and clever, asleep and alert, but they are all in the same class. The tyranny of the past over the present is ultimately the same thing as the tyranny of the Sabbath (meaning the term in widest spread of sail) over human life, and to unlearn is out of all comparison harder than to learn. There is a world of difference between living on the past and profiting by it. We are dominated to-day by the automatics of tradition as were the Aztecs who sacrificed human lives in theirs to feed the gods, in obedience to pure theory. To call the old gods by new names, even such high-sounding names as morality and the State, or sweet-smelling ones like humanity and freedom, is so often to rebaptize not to oust them.

But in our complex society it is difficult to watch these reactions between man and the thought he takes for the morrow. In the early experiments of civilization, on the borderlands between primitive and civilized, the perspective is clear and hard as a winter morning. I have arranged these essays in three divisions, each falling into the other like the cascades of a triple-terraced waterfall. Nature and man have been making each other from the dawn of the Pleistocene to the

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Bungaloid Age; let us drop in and see a little of the drama between them. Since my theme throughout is what Nature makes of man, man of Nature, and civilization of them both, there is here and there some interlocking and inevitable repetition, but I have done what I could to guard against that.

A word about the Victorians. Why, the reader will ask, do you waste munitions on them? Either you are indulging a prejudice or plaguing ghosts. I wish I could agree with him. In one sense the Victorians are more alive in our midst to-day than they were in their own. For they were the cause and we are the consequences. And even if they are ghosts, the trouble of history is that ghosts are so much more powerful than living men.

It is the fashion in Bloomsbury to regard the Victorian Age as a rather intriguing curio, the bizarreries of whose manners and customs repay a detached study. No attitude could be wider of the truth. Our own period is largely a reaction from and a logical extension of Victorianism, and they add up to much the same result. The distractions, the bewilderments, the pessimism, the mocking, disillusioned spirit of our times, its passion for forgetfulness, its thirst for mental dope, its easy victimization by the vile Sunday Press, these and other as familiar symptoms of social dyspepsia are a direct inheritance from the dehumanized criteria of the Victorians. Our litter is of their making, our mildewed crop of their sowing. The desecration of the countryside, the worship of machinery for its own sake, the horrid greeds of commercialism, the omnipresence of

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ugliness in modern life – its speed and noise and unbelief – is there a disease we suffer from which was not incubated in a society which regarded the young Tennyson as not quite *comme il faut*? Its false romanticism has generated the sterile ‘realism’ of our intellectuals; its subjection of women and detestable ideas of property in human relationships are responsible for the anomalies of our law, the decline of romantic love, the chaos of promiscuity, the tragedies of the clash between precedent and humanity so apparent in the sexual life of the modern world.

I agree that these disorders are from one point of view a far, far better thing than that binding of the human spirit which Victorianism achieved. But their fruit is pure negativism, and we lack so poignantly a positive kindling faith to live by, formed naturally out of the needs of our own age and not depending so slavishly, as do the phenomena of so much of modern life, upon the past.¹

The extension of Victorian notions into our own generation is as unquestionable as our automatic reactions from them. Industrialism tells its own story. In the province of ideas, the incalculably harmful theories of our ‘savage’ heritage, of ‘nature red in tooth and claw’ and similar fallacies, are almost universally believed to-day. I do not pretend to deny that the Victorian era threw up many great men (all of them, worth their salt, were at odds with it, and one of whom

¹ The new discoveries in physics, which have really destroyed Victorian materialism in this science, are a good example of a genuine Renaissance.

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— Ruskin — was finally driven crazy by it), and has left its mark upon history as a tremendous world-force. But in that it depreciated the coinage of human values and deprived the human spirit of contact with the realities of life, it was an enemy of mankind. My excuse for drawing attention to this is that incomparably better writers with rare exceptions omit to do so.

H. J. M.

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'From Nature man receives a mild and gentle disposition, so prone to reciprocal benevolence that he delights to be loved for the pleasure of being loved, without any view to interest; and feels a satisfaction in doing good, without a wish or prospect of remuneration. This disposition to do disinterested good is natural to man. . . . Hence even the common people, in the ordinary language of daily conversation, denominate whatever is connected with mutual goodwill, humane; so that the word humanity no longer describes man's nature merely in a physical sense, but signifies humane manners, or a behaviour worthy the nature of man, acting his proper part in civil society.' — ERASMUS, 1517.

I

FROM NATURE TO MAN

I

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THE ancients arraigned their gods for their troubles or referred back their more atrocious misdeeds to supernatural policy. Later, fate, destiny or the stars bore the burden of human ills, and Church or State were invoked to create new ones. Finally, in the middle of the nineteenth century, a fresh method of glorifying modern civilization and explaining its savageries and disorders away was discovered. This was to blame Nature for our cruelties and praise our civilized conquest of her in redeeming us from the worst of them. Nature, that cruel, blind, rapacious force, had breathed all the fury of her being into her loftiest creation, Man; but the usages, refinements and institutions of civilization had partially weaned us from the brutish and guided our faltering steps towards the sublime. The anthropologists joined hands with the misinterpreters of Darwin by detecting in the ferocities of primitive human nature what the Darwinian school assumed to be the laws and processes of Nature. The two sciences were complementary and the three Fates were no longer the Witch-sisters with their yarn and abhorred shears, but a compound of Ape, Tiger and Cave-man. The will of this triform monster to live and overcome the weaker brethren produced civilization, which in its turn forged

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the nose-ring to lead him up the steep path of transfiguration. Out of this theory arose the modern notion of the cruelty of Nature.

THE VICTORIAN VIEW OF NATURE

If I have thus simplified it, I have not libelled its manufacturers in the doing. Here are some extracts. Wrote William James: 'Beauty and hideousness, love and cruelty, life and death, keep house together in indissoluble partnership; and there gradually steals over us instead of the old warm notion of a man-loving deity, that of an awful power that neither hates nor loves, but rolls all things together meaninglessly to a common doom.' The same doctrine reappears in such widely different personalities as Nietzsche and Thomas Hardy, and is a philosophic rendering of the Darwinian formula of chance variations generating new species through the struggle for existence. The American writer, John Burroughs, carried the idea of a universal steam-roller run amuck a step further:— 'What savagery, what thwartings and delays, what carnage and suffering, what an absence of all that we mean by intelligent planning. Just a clash of forces, the battle to the strong and the race to the fleet.' Huxley, whose terse and muscular style incriminated Nature as helplessly as was poor Mr. Pickwick by the lawyers of Mrs. Bardell, recoiled from the sheer sinfulness of the natural world:— 'From the point of view of the moralist, the animal world is on about the same level as a gladiators' show. . . . Life is a continuous free fight and the Hobbesian war of

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each against all is the normal state of existence' (*The Struggle for Existence and its Bearing upon Man*, 1888). Counsel drew a sanguinary picture of 'myriads of generations of herbivorous animals tormented and devoured by carnivores,' and of animals 'subject to all the miseries incidental to old age, disease and over-multiplication,' while he drew tears of self-congratulation from the Victorian jury when he compared the 'sighs and groans of pain' in Nature with 'those heard by Dante at the Gate of Hell.' Not content with putting a curse on Nature for the calamities of mortal existence, Haeckel declared that the pageant of horror was prolonged in cycle after cycle to eternity.

But the palm of pessimism must be awarded to Winwood Reade, whose famous *Martyrdom of Man*, reprinted in 1924 with a preface by H. G. Wells, did not shirk the inevitable logic of the views foisted upon Darwinism by its apostles: — 'The Book of Nature . . . is inscribed in blood and tears; it is when we study the laws regulating life, the laws productive of development, that we see plainly how illusive is the theory that God is love. In all things, there is cruel, profligate and abandoned waste. . . . The law of Murder is the law of Growth. Life is one long tragedy; creation is one great crime. . . . O cold, cruel, miserable life, how long are your pains, how brief are your delights! Pain, grief, disease and death, are these the inventions of a loving God? That no animal shall rise to excellence except by being fatal to the life of others, is this the law of a kind Creator? Pain is not less pain because it is useful; murder is not less murder because

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it is conducive to development. Here is blood upon the hand still, and all the perfumes of Arabia shall not sweeten it.'

But what is harder to bear than such lachrymose ululations is the Victorian patronage of Nature, the least pleasing of the many facets of anthropomorphizing her and a vicious habit surviving into our own times. When the old writers anthropomorphized Nature and clothed their projections with abstract virtues and vices, the results were so unlike natural life that they were no more than a decorative *mise en scène*, and there was nothing to worry about. But when a salad knowledge of Nature was linked with moralizing upon her processes, then the fat was in the fire. Our fathers told us that there is no altruism in Nature, no such element as reason, 'because Reason can only exist where there is Soul,' no such thing as dwelling together in harmony 'except we recognize the community of all nations to assassinate those weaker than themselves.' If Nature is thus outside the pale of all civilized restraints and canons, it seems superfluous to arraign her for defects of moral and mental education to which she does not pretend to conform. But our parents would not let her escape so easily. They held her firmly by the hand, and blended chastisement with approbation. One writer calls attention, for instance, to 'the inherent chastity of Nature,' and one would so much rather hear from him of her lack of any moral sense, of patriotism and the civic virtues, than praised for qualities so utterly meaningless.

There are, indeed, no limits to the quicksands of

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absurdity and cheapness into which the interpretation of Nature in terms of our own perishable standards and conventions can lead us. For that tendency no less a person than Huxley must be held responsible with his fatal and misleading catchword of the 'gladiatorial show,' Tennyson for 'red in tooth and claw.' One reflects with relief that even men of genius cannot convert Nature into a Mephistopheles or Victorian ingénue or universalized garden-Maud. But it is not so much for Nature's sake as in the cause of our sane and right relations both with her and with one another that one deplores this shallow moralizing whose inheritance is still fashionable. The supreme reality of Nature is not something that can be measured with a moral foot-rule, and naturalists of all people should have learned by now to refrain from dismembering her between her sheep and her goats. We are on surer ground in seeing her as always true to her manifold self and beautiful to everlasting.

The Darwinian philosophers sat down and wept, not for the crimes of their own age, but the cruelties of Nature that had made them possible. Absurdly morbid and hysterical as their pre-war jeremiads appear, it is to the credit of a few of them that they went the whole hog. Better, I think, see the universe as a lightless torture-chamber from start to finish than indulge the complacency of the evolutionary theory of the 'seventies that civilization is disciplining us out of our heritage of natural bestiality. If cruelty be indeed the Caliban-child of Nature, if her laws enshrine competition, waste and rapacity for the strong to kick the weak

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into the gutter, then the Victorians were right, and the bottom is knocked out of the universe. It is a godless dust-storm of crazily driving electrons.

NATURE AND CRUELTY

But the misconceptions involved in the Victorian attitude to Nature are so manifold that the puzzle is, how to get in among them. The heads of the Dragon of Error are all coiled round one another and the smoke from their fire-breathing mouths gets in our eyes. When the sentimentalist bewails the cruelty of Nature, what does he mean? The simplest definition of cruelty is the conscious desire to inflict pain for the satisfaction it affords. Cruelty means giving pain for pleasure's sake. It combines an intellectual and emotional subtlety far beyond the reach of any animal. The Cat-and-Mouse Act is the stock example of Nature's deliberate cruelty and begs half a dozen questions. First, the cat is not a wild animal; secondly, its cerebration is not complex enough to enjoy the terror of the mouse; thirdly, the feline sense regards the mouse's actions as pure movements, not as a manifestation of tortured nerves; fourthly, there is no evidence that the mouse suffers any more acuteness of pain than the cat desires to inflict; while, fifthly, the conditions of life in wild Nature absolutely preclude the enjoyment of pain as an end in itself. No wild predaceous animal has either the time or the opportunity or the need or the mental organization to dally with its prey for the sake of the pleasurable sensory reactions its sufferings would excite. As Alfred

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Russell Wallace wrote in *The World of Life*: 'Carnivora hunt and kill to satisfy hunger, not for amusement; and all conclusions derived from the house-fed cat and mouse are fallacious. Even in the case of man, with his highly sensitive nervous system which has been developed on account of his unprotected skin and excessive liability to accidental injury, seizure by a lion or tiger is hardly painful or mentally distressing, as testified by those who have been thus seized and have escaped.'

There is, indeed, no reasonable doubt, first, that sensibility to pain is conditioned by the complexity of the nervous system, so that the capacity for feeling pain is on an ascending scale between not merely the animal and the human worlds, but men of coarser and men of more delicate fibre; and secondly, that violent and sudden onslaught paralyses the activity of the nerve-centres. Thus the cat-and-mouse example breaks down at both ends. Common sense indeed takes us further than stating that conscious cruelty is and must be a stranger to natural life. The very armature of the natural slayer, tooth and claw and fang and muscle of lightning, is Nature's quality of mercy, Death's gentlest minister. Would sentiment clip the claw and file the tooth so that the passage between life and death might be one of 'painful steps and slow'? For the victim's pain to be lingering would be a maladjustment of means to end.

Cruelty as an exercise of conscious power for pleasure's sake over the helpless or vulnerable is thus a fungus growth in the garden of man alone, and, later

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on, we shall have to discover whence, if not a natural inheritance, it does come. As Dr. Shadwell pertinently asks: 'What I should like to know is where the character that takes pleasure in inflicting suffering comes from, if we are descended from the other animals who have it not. We have heard a good deal about the divine spark in which animals do not share; what about the infernal spark in which also they do not share?' But before answering that question, as I think it can be answered, we have to examine the charge of *unconscious* cruelty in Nature, as manifested both in her workmanship and her general architectural design. It is obvious that the Victorian wailings quoted above go far beyond an indictment within the more precise meaning of the term 'cruelty.'

CRUELTY AND NECESSITY

When we analyse the sources of the inexhaustible beauty of Nature, it is apparent that two main factors account for it. To begin with, natural beauty is an emanation of the flaming power of life into a myriad diverse forms – the hippopotamus with his sinews of brass, the mollusc with the hidden hues and exquisite convolution of its shell, the tiny alpine flower singing its perfect lyric with all its graciousness and might. It is a divine surge that will not be denied and informs alike the mind of Beethoven and the volcanic throb of the humming-bird's heart. The problem of every living thing is how to shape and utilize that energy to its utmost personal capacity and so to the greater glory and

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abundance of life itself. Only in that sense can Nature be called 'moral,' and to judge her by our own fugitive codes and taboos is an anthropocentric self-sufficiency which has taken mankind at least fifty centuries of civilization to unlearn.

Natural beauty is, in the second place, the result of harmonizing means to ends: it is a fitness of workmanship. The power of life is Nature's capital; the evolutionary efforts of her creatures to increase it are the workability by which they adjust themselves to new and ever newer circumstance. Natural beauty is all comprehended in the Parable of the Talents – each creature has to make the most in its own way of the gift of life. Now there can be no two opinions that cruelty, conscious or unconscious, is an ugly thing. Why is it ugly? Surely the answer is that it is a misdirected use of surplus energy, a spilling over into something injurious from the adaptation of means to ends. A motor-car is not ugly, because its body and mechanism are perfectly adapted to a necessary end – travel. A battleship, a tank, are hideous, however ingeniously made, because their purpose is purely wasteful and destructive. They represent the energy of the community spilled over into a sombrely unproductive end. A hawk, who is also a killing machine, is fierce, but neither ugly nor cruel, because to kill is a necessity of his existence. And I think it is a safe axiom that necessity, provided it really be necessity (there's the rub), is neither ugly nor cruel.

In every organism there is something left over from the struggle with its environment, and it is this surplus energy which is responsible for the formation of new

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species. If species were perfectly adapted to their immediate surroundings, the whole natural world would remain stagnant, and stagnation is another word for degeneracy. And here and there we can discover examples where this surplus energy has become misdirected, when, to use the broader term, the marginal power of life is left at a loose end and wastefully spent. The wren, for instance, builds an unnecessary number of nests, one after another, in a passion of excess. That is waste without cruelty, folly without ugliness. But the weasel, no doubt from his power, once a utility, of charming or bemusing or 'fascinating' his prey, goes in for killing more rabbits than he needs for his living. He has acquired a blood-lust which can certainly be defined as unconscious cruelty. The adjustment between predatory and preyed upon has been dislocated by a shifting of the balance between pursuit and escape. But this is an exception to the general natural law and to the impartial justice of Nature who gives strength to the strong, fleetness to the swift, strategy to the weak and co-operation to the defenceless. There is a structural and psychic hierarchy of genera in Nature, but there is an equality of opportunity for each species to live its life relative to the fullest stretch of its powers, with a bit over to turn into something else.

CRUELTY AND DEATH

But the Victorians quarrelled with much more than these disharmonious exceptions. They were at odds with the general scheme and order of Nature from which

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they departed. They quarrelled with death itself as a cruelty and forgot to study its discriminations. Life and death are so interlocked within the economy of the universe that they are not separable, and whoso falls foul of death is unfitted to pronounce upon its services to life. The workability of life and progress and the harmony of all the parts in the whole depend upon the co-operation of death. Without death, no organism could have advanced beyond a speck of jelly, for death is change and change is evolution. When the one-celled animals surrendered their birthright of immortality, their sacrifice in the end gave us all birds and beasts and men. The only home for those who cannot accept the universal truth of death is the Land of the Struldbruggs, where they can taste the joys of immortal senility.

In Nature there is death enough, but no anticipation of it nor torment of dwelling upon its terrors. When my little dog 'Sago' died, he slept and did not wake again. No sinister glint is seen upon the scythe before the reaping is done, nor is the hand that wields it that of a tremulous greybeard. If it is unsparing to decrepitude, there is no need for lock-hospitals, homes for the blind and deficient, nor asylums. Conserving such afflicted is our credit; the conditions that engendered them a shame that is not Nature's. It is not death that counts in weighing the values of the natural order, but where and how it falls. It falls upon the callow and witless young, upon the weakly, upon the sick and upon the foolish, and if we object to that incidence, we have to regret that it does not fall upon those who drain the

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potent brew of life and experience rather than upon those who only sip or spill or fumble with it. As Darwin wrote: 'No fear is felt, death is generally prompt, and the vigorous, the healthy and the happy survive and multiply.'

That fear in nature is no more than a transitory stimulus to action for removing the cause of fear and inoperative the moment the effect of that cause is spent may be observed in any English wood, along any hedgerow or common. The nightingale, missed in the swoop of the sparrow hawk, at once resumes his singing as though he had won Arcadia by his escape; the sparrow with his tail in the cat's claws continues to pursue his fair without discouragement at forfeiting so powerful an aid to conquest. Here is a quotation to the same effect from the Assistant Director of the American Museum of Natural History and an official of a good many other as formidable bodies. He is describing a zoological visit to the famous Guano Islands off the coast of Peru. Sea-lions are gorging themselves on a herring shoal. Mr. Robert Cushman Murphy:—

'As the lobo (sea-lion) bore swiftly down upon the fishes, the latter would dart aside as if terror-stricken, but, astounding as it may seem, they became quiet no less abruptly the instant that the enemy had passed, and they showed not the slightest tendency towards deserting the locality. To those who wax sentimental over the universal cruelty of nature, the scene would have been a convincing object-lesson. Ruthlessness in nature is not necessarily cruel. It is obvious that

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the herrings in the Chincha Strait, although from one point of view intended by nature to furnish the subsistence of the sea-lion, did *not* live in fear of their relentless persecutor. It is equally clear that those fishes which had achieved the most hairbreadth escapes from the lobo cherished no unpleasant memories of their danger, not even for the briefest period; and that, as individuals, they acquired no profit by their experience other than their momentary safety. Life and death to them meant nothing; escape represented only the fortuitous and instinctive functioning of a reflex produced by an external stimulus (*i.e.* the seal). Time and again while I looked on at a distance of ten feet, the torpedo-like lobo shot among the fish and took toll. The reaction, both individual and collective, was invariably the same – a violent spurt which carried the fish a yard or two ahead, and then a prompt return to lethargy' (*Bird Islands of Peru*, 1925).

But mainly is death-dealing, as we shall see later, in the charge of the great inanimate forces, and it is a fact now widely accepted among naturalists that the overwhelming majority of animals destroyed by predatory beasts and birds are those whose disabilities or lack of health and vitality or incapacity to learn by experience would, if they had survived, imperil the vigour of the species. Only a small number of individuals in a given species fall victims to their natural enemies, who thus act as winnowers against starvation and disease. Were there no such selective agency and check to overpopulation, a species would increase so far beyond the

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limits of its food-supply as to be faced with extinction. Nor does wild Nature present a spectacle of waste to a just understanding of her processes. The losses due to the inanimate environment are necessarily so enormous that a high rate of increase is indispensable for meeting the liability of gaps caused by the disfavours and fluctuations of that environment. Stop the 'wastage' and, as Mr. Nicholson, a very modern and acute observer of bird-life, has pointed out, only a fraction of living creatures would find their food. Drastic, astringent, peremptory, intolerant of the laggard, the drifter, the Laodicean, the ungirt, the facing both ways Nature certainly is – but cruel never. When Nature is stern, you see it, for she does not hide a cold and hard heart under the silky veils of kindness.

OTHER NATURAL NIGHTMARES

Parasitism is, of course, an ugly phenomenon in Nature and appears at first sight to contradict my last words. But even parasites in their larval, free-living stage possess grace and justify their existence. When adult, they degenerate and forfeit their birthright of beauty and freedom. It is just as though Nature permitted them to live by every manner of tortuous expedient, but withdrew the light of her countenance from them. Complete parasites (for partial parasites like the dodder and eyebright are far from ugly) bear the livery of dishonour by unsightliness, by loss of activity, by incapacity to progress, by a-sexuality, by atrophy of limb, by slothful monotony of life and (most important of

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all) by dependence upon a chain of outside factors in getting their living which heavily discount their chances of survival. The liver-fluke, for instance, dies unless an elaborate pastoral drama is played right through for its benefit. Since the actors are not coached to their parts, only a decimal percentage of liver-flukery gets home at the curtain. It can hardly be maintained that Nature favours the sybarite when such penalties are attached to selling its independence. It is indeed a mistake to speak of Nature in these anthropomorphic terms at all; we should only do so as a convenient generalization. Every species, high or low, is endowed at birth with the will to live, the chance to make the most of it, the choice to explore new fields of adventure and the capacity to change into something fuller yet of life. The flying reptile chose to become a bird; the alert secretive reptile nuzzling and scuttling among the roots of the herbage chose to become a mammal; the parasite chose to remain at a table from which the other diners had departed upon their affairs. That is all there is to say. The harm wrought by parasites again has been grossly exaggerated. Frequently, a productive symbiosis exists between host and parasite, and it is only when an organism is weakened that the parasite becomes dangerous to it and only when it is transplanted to a new environment that its lack of defensive adaptation causes mortality. Professor Arthur Thomson speaks of the 'unconscious devilry' of a parasite like the larva of the ichneumon fly which develops within the body of a caterpillar. But he recognizes that the caterpillar is largely a feeding machine and does not suffer from

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neurosis, while, as for the parasite, its devilry is at least not that of man, who knows (sometimes) what he is doing.

Another Victorian nightmare was ridden by Tennyson: 'So careless of the single life, so careful of the type she seems.' The lower in the scale of evolution we descend, the more are organisms units of a species rather than members of a group. The higher we climb, the more are animals differentiated from their fellows and integrated in their particular selves. The animal kingdom progresses from servitude towards mastery over environment; automatic reflex gives way to purposive intelligence and living beings pass from form to form of semi-consciousness towards the final particularity of freedom. The process of evolution may thus be defined as the slow emergence of individuality. The reduction of the number of young on the higher rungs of the ladder; the education of wider experience prevailing over the routine of the less highly organized (animals as low as the tube-worm – *Terebella* – and the water-flea have been known to profit by trial and error); changes of habit and finally structure to meet those of environment; love of mates and prolonged courtship (common to many birds and some mammals); the extension of leisure and so enjoyment among social communities, these and other phenomena of animal life are all means to that end. And we have to remember that the theory of Lamarck and Samuel Butler after him has gained acres of ground over that of natural selection working upon blind variations since the Victorian period. It tells us that changes of habit environmentally induced are followed by structural modifications which are

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inherited, and that this principle of use and disuse is guided by an inward urge towards improvement. Parasitism and over-specialization are the nemesis of animals that won't listen to it. Most are caught by that divine restlessness of desire to change or by unconscious perception of the need to change; most are gropingly aware that where there's a will there's a way. The peacock, that is to say, does not display because he possesses an Arabian Nights train; he develops the train because he displays and he displays because he wants to. If Lamarck was right, individual discovery by a few members of the species is the true driving-force of variation and so of evolution. It certainly is so in the history of human society.

THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE

But it was what they thought of the struggle for existence and all its unconscious cruelties that drove the Victorians into an intellectual materialism reflecting contemporary conditions that came to a head in 1914. When we study their writings, we can see at once that they are generalizing, not from Darwin, who insisted upon 'the large and metaphorical sense, including dependence of one being upon another,' of the term 'struggle,' but from Malthus. His ideas corresponded not with Nature's methods and design, but the mercilessly competitive standards prevailing in Victorian industrialism: The Victorian naturalists were writing a history of their own times. The dogma of the 'survival of the fittest' presented itself to them as a crude warfare of each

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against all, of species against species in which the devil took the hindmost, the weakest went to the wall and the 'fools' and 'weak-minded enthusiasts' were the predestined victims of the shambles. They spoke of the animal world, in Kropotkin's words, 'as though nothing were to be seen in it but lions and hyenas plunging their teeth into the flesh of their victims.' They did not pause to ask, 'Who are the fittest?' though Darwin's truer test of survival-value in the *Descent of Man* was set down in their own Bible – 'Those communities which included the greatest number of sympathetic members would flourish best.' It did not occur to them to ask why, if cut-throat competition was the law of Nature, one of the most successful and varied of avian races is the defenceless duck; why the frail willow-warbler which only lays one clutch of eggs and migrates over vast distances is one of the most abundant species in the entire kingdom of birds; why the numbers of animals without armament of any kind predominate over those of the carnivores in the ratio of something like a thousand to one. In the forests of South America exists a family of birds called the *Dendrocolaptidæ* or Woodhewers. Their flight is very feeble; they possess no marked specialization; they lack all defensive equipment, while no one species competes with another. Of those species there are 290, each with peculiar habits of its own, and the causes for such a triumph of survival have been intelligence and sociability.

Kropotkin's now famous book, *Mutual Aid*, had no currency among the followers of Darwin. In some respects it is now out of date. It tends to assume that

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solitary species are usually fierce, though man's own anthropoid stock is a telling example to the contrary, and in insisting upon the peacefulness of social communities, it did not give enough weight to the wars of ants, nor was the author acquainted with the territorialism of certain species of birds with which I shall deal later. But his main contention – namely, that animal sociability had reduced the 'warfare' in Nature to a minimum – stands four-square and unchallengeable. There is no doubt that ant society is a hereditary social instinct. But the association of birds, mammals, fishes and molluscs are so variable and periodic as to have necessarily originated not in instinct, but intelligent action for mutual protection. These societies thus avoid competition. They are peaceful, and their societies have played an incalculably more important part as a factor of evolution than mutual struggle. Kropotkin justly enumerates the advantages of sociability both to the species and the individual. It defends the feeble, permits long life, slows down the birth-rate, enables the young to be reared with the least waste of energy, renders the quest for food more effective and develops such qualities as compassion, sensibility, individuality and intelligence. Such qualities thus become of biological significance in evolution: they are fitnesses in the struggle for survival.

'Fitness' is thus a more subtle qualification for survival than was dreamed of in the Victorian philosophy of Nature. The same Malthusian narrowness of outlook was applied to the struggle for existence, in which the responsibility for man's cruelties in warring upon his

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own kind was shifted upon the natural order. Since no animal except the ant wars upon its own kind, and only a tiny minority of their species, on what evidence did the Victorians present their theory that life was 'a continuous free fight in which no quarter is given'? The real meaning of the struggle for existence is the response of every organism to the adverse conditions of its environment. If no such struggle existed, fatty degeneration would have been the fate of the entire animate world. In the struggle, the natural checks to over-population – weather, the limits of the food-supply, and other factors – have been of dominant importance, and since we no longer believe than an earthquake is the bad temper of Jehovah, we can scarcely denounce the inorganic for callous behaviour. On the whole, it is obviously favourable to life.

It was a pity, therefore, that Darwin never wrote the book upon these natural checks that he contemplated. His disciples fell back upon his statement of 'The Struggle for Life most severe between Individuals and Varieties of the same Species.' The material was, however, a starvation diet, since of the struggle between interrelated species only five examples were given and of the struggle between individuals of the same species not a single one. It was not like Darwin to base a theory of natural warfare carrying a terrible justification of human warfare upon so slender a foundation. The five examples he gave were two species of American swallow, the black and the brown rat, the song and mistle thrushes in Scotland, the smaller and larger cockroaches in Russia, the hive and the stingless bees

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in Australia. Wallace himself disposed of the example of the Scottish thrushes by showing that they did not interfere with each other in the manner stated. The black and the brown rats could not have competed together since their habitats and, to a large extent, their food are entirely different, while the increase of the hive-bee and the small cockroach at the expense of their congeners was certainly due to human interference. The artificial importation of the grey squirrel through human agency is in the same way responsible for the decline of our native red squirrel. That leaves only one example, and I confess I know nothing about these *jusqu'au boutist* swallows.

Modern research, I may add, has shown that certain species of migratory passerine birds compete in the spring for nesting territories. But it is exceedingly rare for such birds to do each other any harm, while, with the host of other species, mating takes place before the break-up of the winter congregations and thus abrogates the necessity for a male to select an exclusive territory and by rivalry of song attract the female to it. Territorial competition is not an instinctive endowment at all, but an acquired habit among some tribes of birds to meet the pressure of specific circumstance.

What, in fact, misled Darwin was the mystery of the disappearance of intermediate forms among closely related species. He solved it by assuming, on the evidence I have given, that these forms were exterminated by their surviving kin. One might as well assume that the survivors in a party of explorers had won through by massacring their less fortunate comrades.

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The appearance of a new variety in a given area only means that its less adaptable relatives have by the tardiness or weakness or stupidity or old-fashioned routine of their response to a changing environment died out in course of time. Not outside aggression but their own over-specialization was their undoing. Competitiveness as a necessity of natural life was, in short, the postulate of a set of thinkers whose mentality was dyed in the conditions of life prevailing at a particular period in their own society. It is interesting that the theory of extermination between kindred species was invented in an age when the primitive Tasmanians and Boethuk of Newfoundland were exterminated by their own genus. If the Victorians had regarded the beam in their own eyes instead of the mote in Nature's, it might have been a very different world to-day.

In trying to show how erroneous was the assumption of cruelty in the natural order, I have found no space in which to dwell upon the more creative aspects of that order. I have not written of the exuberance of living creatures; of the intensity of life, however brief, enjoyed by those who have achieved warm-bloodedness; of the love and fidelity of mates, a fountain of delight issuing through season after season; of song; of dancing; of sport, and of a happiness unclouded by the endless cares and burdens and restrictions which civilization imposes upon the lords of creation. We have passed many leagues beyond the animal kingdom, but the price we have had to pay for our new civilized skin has been the shedding of that gift that Nature withholds from none of her children – the gift of spontaneous felicity. Do

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we not know the truth about Nature so well that we keep on forgetting it? Everybody is aware that a patient who keeps a happy and peaceful heart will get well twice as quickly as the impatient, angry and fretful one. Anger, in other words, sets up injurious neurological reactions. Nature is all for happiness.

CRUELTY IN HUMAN NATURE

If, then, cruelty is not an instinctive legacy from Nature, where in the world are we to look for the origin of the 'infernal spark' in mankind? The theologian answers that pregnant question by his dogma of 'original sin,' while the Darwinian anthropologist replies in much the same terms by deriving civilized progress from the survival-value of pugnacity in the 'savage.' He within the human province is speaking with the voice of the Darwinian apostle within the natural, and the one doctrine is just as theoretic as the other.

Its growth has a long mental tradition behind it which I cannot examine here, and modern research is revealing more and more clearly that the customs and institutions of this hypothetical 'savage' were not an expression of his instinctive human nature. They were a cultural imposition from without and due to the contact of early migratory civilization with primitive society. The older anthropologist confuses the primitive who possesses no civilized institutions or any social organization whatever with the savage whose way of life has been radically altered by the permeations of archaic culture. The primitive, the living concrete

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reality, still exists in remote, obscure and unprofitable corners of the earth and as Nature had made him.¹ Extensive records of his habits and disposition have been collected and from them we can discover absolutely no trace or hint or germ of cruelty in behaviour. None of the *genuinely* primitive communities know human sacrifice, cannibalism, war nor any form of the tortures familiar in savage society. As Mr. W. J. Perry, who has done such enlightened work in rescuing primitive man, the repository of our fundamental human nature, from the libels of Victorian anthropology, remarks: 'There is complete harmony and absence of violence or cruelty. Authority does not exist and decisions are taken by mutual consent.' This verdict is of uniform application, for the conduct of primitives is not influenced by racial divergencies or differences of habitat. Neither climate nor physical type is the test, but absence of cultural innovation alone.

Since it is highly relevant both to our general subject-matter and to this particular facet of it, some reference is necessary to the disposition of the anthropoid apes, whose general habits of life are more closely analogous to those of primitive man than are the latter's to a civilized way of life. As Professor Elliot Smith remarks in *In the Beginning* (Howe, 1928), 'primitive man shows no more innate tendency than do the manlike apes to embark upon the process of civilization.' The link between the anthropoids and man at the bottom of the cultural ladder is so obviously close that Carl Akeley's

¹ For a closer examination of this problem, see my *Golden Age* (Howe), *Downland Man* and pp. 138-41 and 187-94 of this volume.

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account¹ of the Mount Kivu gorillas is of the utmost significance. The gorilla, he says, when free from human persecution, is 'a perfectly amiable and decent creature.' He shows no disposition to attack mankind or creature-kind unless he is in danger of being set upon. Huxley in *Man's Place in Nature* declared that the old male gorillas of the Cameroons will not hesitate to attack a human being at first sight. But it has now been demonstrated that all the gorillas in this district which have been killed were scarred with old wounds given by previous hunters. Unmolested and in their natural state, the gorillas range in small groups without in any way interfering with each other or similar groups or other dwellers in the forest. The gorilla is, of course, man's nearest relative, but the chimpanzees and orangutans are not structurally far removed from it. Their mildness and gentleness of temper are now universally acknowledged, and here at the roots of human evolution we find a type of conduct which exactly squares with the more recent investigations upon the nature of primitive man. It is clear that the hunters invented most of the stories of anthropoid ferocity to plume up their prowess and secure their consciences from the charge of murder. Those that were true were the inevitable consequence of previous human aggression.

That brings me to primitives that have been known

¹ Carl Akeley, *Gorillas - Real and Mythical* (1923). Also see the Akeley Memorial Number of *Natural History*, vol. xxvii, 1927, p. 168. A cautionary word is necessary in comparing Genus Homo with the anthropoids, who are *specialized*. Man advanced by retaining his primitive 'characters.'

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to retaliate for civilized aggression. The Bushmen and Tasmanians, primitives in that they did not value metals or practise agriculture, displayed a marked cruelty in their resistance to European penetration. 'There is not the slightest doubt,' writes Mr. Perry, 'that this cruel behaviour was a reaction to aggression, and an imitation of behaviour exhibited by those of more advanced culture.' The cruelty of primitive man is not instinctive but imitative; he stands between Nature and civilization and the 'infernal spark' was dropped into his midst from the culture that came after him, not from the universal mother that begat him. If the inevitable conclusion is the likewise unpalatable one that we have to seek the origin and meaning of cruelty among the artificialities of civilization, it is not to be burked by our common agreement upon the blessings it has brought us. Whether those blessings outweigh their corresponding afflictions is the riddle of the Sphinx.

THE ORIGIN OF CRUELTY

Cruelty has been classified into three grades. Grade 1 is cruelty committed from an ulterior motive, such as war, punishment, and the various abuses practised upon animals. Grade 2 represents border-line cases due to thoughtlessness and without conscious motive. Grade 3 is cruelty pursued of set purpose and for its own sake. Leaving the second category out of account and sadism, or sexual cruelty, for later discussion, what I want to show is that the third grade is usually a development, whether directly or indirectly, of the first. And the first, oblique or secondary cruelty, that is to say, proceeds either from

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an intellectual idea which had nothing to do with cruelty or (more frequently) from the crystallization of that idea into an institution. For all institutions are ideas externalized – too often from all human control. Human sacrifice, war, the exploitation of human beings for commercial purposes, blood-sports – these are a few obvious examples of artificial stimulation to cruel behaviour. Many other institutions and systems of thought with the worthiest reputation – Puritanism as a creed, other religious proselytism, state-craft, certain legalities, forms of social punishment, marriage in which the property element is stressed and other elements of morality can be and very often are the occasion for an imponderable amount of cruelty. This is a bare fact, not a judgment.

The true point is that none of these systems or institutions, not even human sacrifice, were cruel in their origins and of deliberate intent. They only came to inflict cruelty when they became abstracted from their human context, when they drifted out of reach of human values, when they became systematized by independent complexity of growth and sanctified by custom and tradition. So far from wearing the recognizable brand of cruelty, they were, and many of them still are, eminently respectable. The cruel acts they were responsible for escaped the name of cruelty because they were performed under the sanction of that respectability. From time to time reformers have arisen who have called cruelty by its right name, however hallowed its associations, and then little by little the institution is discredited until its successor also gets detached from its human

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moorings. It is perfectly obvious that the forms of cruelty so induced have nothing to do with Nature or inherent human devilry. They are the effect of an artificial environment and only flourish within the pale of that environment.

Let us take a few bald instances. The mediæval Inquisition brought diabolism to a fine art, but its object was the salvation of the human soul from the damnation of heresy. What loftier or more moral purpose? It was the heretic who was the wrong-doer, not his torturers. It is the excuse for nearly all persecutions causing cruelty that the persecuted party is in the wrong. The inhumanity of the persecutor, being morally justified, does not matter, or, quite simply, is not recognized as cruelty, especially by him. Cruelties, again, are practised under the immemorial charter of formal sport which, if detached from it, would be execrated.

Or take the slave-trade at the beginning of the last century. Slaves were obtained by fomenting tribal war, and out of every thousand negroes transhipped in British naval vessels from West Africa to America seventy per cent. perished. The weakest were left to starve on shore or pitched into the sea, while the fettered slaves were packed so closely into the holds of the ships that they could not change their position. If they refused to eat, red-hot coals were placed in their mouths. Yet it took Clarkson and his fellow-agitators not years but decades of effort before the trade was abolished. Why? Because it was supported not merely by a huge vested interest, but some of the most cherished traditions of the British Navy, from Sir John Hawkins with

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his crest of a manacled negro to Nelson, who called the anti-slavery crusade a 'damnable doctrine.' The abominations of the slave-trade were made possible because they were institutional.

The same story is to be told of human sacrifice,¹ a ceremony conducted by high officials, authorized by the State, and blessed by patriotism, religion and morality. It started fairly harmlessly as an idea of agricultural utility; it spun itself out of human control and became complexified into a towering machine of carnage derived from heaven and doing the deeds of hell. It is not human nature which engenders the foul brood of human cruelties but its *isms*, its formalities, its systems got out of hand. As Samuel Butler used to say, the trouble is not with the devil who bears the marks of his profession about him; it is when he becomes respectable and dresses like an angel that the infernal sparks fly upward.

Here is a passage from G. B. S.'s *An Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism* (1928) which exposes the same devil-angel disguise with a force and dexterity beyond me: —

'It is quite easy to give people a second nature, however unnatural, if you catch them early enough. There is no belief, however grotesque and even villainous, that cannot be made a part of human nature if it is inculcated in childhood, and not contradicted in the child's hearing. Now that you are grown up, nothing could persuade you that it is

¹ *N.B.* — See p. 197.

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right to lame every woman for life by binding her feet painfully in childhood, on the ground that it is not ladylike to move about freely like an animal. If you are the wife of a general or admiral nothing could persuade you that when the King dies you and your husband are bound in honour to commit suicide so as to accompany your sovereign into the next world. Nothing could persuade you that it is every widow's duty to be cremated alive with the dead body of her husband. But if you had been caught early enough you could have been made to believe and do all these things exactly as Chinese, Japanese and Indian women have believed and done them. You may say that these were heathen Eastern women, and that you are a Christian Western. But I can remember when your grandmother, also a Christian Western, believed that she would be disgraced for ever if she let any one see her ankles in the street or (if she was a "real lady") walk there alone. The spectacle she made of herself when, as a married woman, she put on a cap to announce to the world that she must no longer be attractive to men, and the amazing figure she cut as a widow in crape robes symbolic of her utter desolation and woe, would, if you could see or even conceive them, convince you that it was purely her luck and not any superiority of Western to Eastern womanhood that saved her from the bound feet, the suttee and the hara-kiri. If you still doubt it, look at the way in which men go to war and commit frightful atrocities because they believe it is their duty, and also because the women would spit in their faces if

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they refused, all because this has been inculcated upon them in their childhood, thus creating the public opinion which enables the Government not only to raise enthusiastic Volunteer armies, but to enforce military service by heavy penalties on the few people who, thinking for themselves, cannot accept wholesale murder and ruin as patriotic virtues.'

There is, in fact, no single abomination of human society past or present for which natural causes or primitive inheritance can be held primarily responsible. Our statesmen rant about letting the ape and tiger and cave-man die. The ape is harmless; the tiger 'might well resent the bloodthirsty character he has been proverbially given,' as a close observer of his habits puts it, and the cave-man is a luckier beginning for us than we deserve! But the animal that really wants slaughtering in the human breast is the sheep, and it was a bad day for the world when sheep and shepherds walked into popular and theological idiom. The sheep is a monster beside which the most horrific fire-spitting dragon is a puppy-dog.

In the majority of cases, Grade 3, or cruelty for its own sake, is a logical growth from Grade 1. Men perform cruel acts not because they are naturally cruel but because, except in pathological cases, they have been initiated into cruelty through the pressure of some external machinery that hardens the sensibilities, blunts or perverts the imagination and alienates the normal human sympathies. It is but a step, though often a long and circuitous one, from cruelty practised

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for what Dr. Shadwell calls an 'ulterior motive' to cruelty relished as a pleasurable end in itself. The cruelties of children to helpless animals, of men and more often women to those who love them, might well be attributed, in both cases, to excess of power over the defenceless, for there is nothing like love to steal the lover's self-defence. Excess of power is, of course, excessively bad for everybody and provokes an education in cruelty parallel with that of some institutions. It is when institutions themselves develop too much power over men that they become cruel. Such powers, as I have argued, do not exist, except very rarely, in natural or primitive life, and we can't be sure to what extent those non-pathological individuals who use their power to hurt have been themselves hurt by the ramifications of circumstance or influenced by training or social environment past and present. When Millamant in *The Way of the World* says: 'One's cruelty is one's power and when one parts with one's cruelty one parts with one's power,' she was not speaking for women as a sex, but for rich and leisured women reared in a greenhouse, deprived of all real freedom and anxious to get a little of their own back. This brings me to the difficult problem of sadism.

SEXUAL CRUELTY

The Freudians maintain that sadism, or the desire to inflict pain for pleasure's sake, resides in the sub-conscious. It is an unwarrantable assumption that because such tendencies sometimes occur in our unconscious selves, they are a heritage from Nature. If

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we look into the recorded cases collected by Mr. Havelock Ellis in *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, it is plain that the slighter and more indefinite ones outside the province of mental disease are due to a disturbance of poise in the sexual equilibrium. This dislocation may be the effect of a hundred different causes between childhood and maturity, of fears, repressions and frustrations all ultimately going back to social circumstance. It is our remoteness from, not our dependence upon, the natural, that is to say, which is the cause of sadistic manifestation.

In Nature, no warm-blooded animal can mate with another without the consent of the female, and her voluntary participation is an impassable barrier against sadistic developments. No female animal is restrained from refusing her consent to cruel treatment by threats of one kind and another, nor exposure before servants, nor economic fears nor the interference of relations nor household unpleasantness. So, when we turn to the examples Mr. Ellis gives of domestic tyranny or sexual cruelty being 'an outcome and survival of the primitive process of courtship,' we find that every single one of them is derived from the nomadic stage of human culture represented by such peoples as the Celts of the West, the Huns, Kalmucks and others of the East. Among these peoples, the glorification of war resulted in the dominance of the male and the subjection of women, while 'marriage by capture' was an established custom. Mr. Ellis is, in fact, repeating the current confusion between the savage and the primitive.

The loss of poise leading to sadistic impulses in sexual relations is closely examined by Mr. Ellis in his chapter

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on 'Love and Pain.' The striking thing is that the large majority of sadistic cases quoted by him are not those of an excessive sexual urge but its very reverse – apathy, frigidity or some allied distemper. A sadistic act is, in fact, an artificial stimulus to sexual emotion. He quotes various medical authorities as follows: 'The creation of pain-sensations may be explained as a desperate device for enhancing the intensity of the emotional state.' Pain 'raises the lowered level of sensibility'; it 'revives a pleasure which custom threatens to dull.' The abnormal, that is to say, is called into play to heighten the subnormal. Some authorities put the percentage of modern Western women whose normal sexual emotions have run cold at ninety per cent. – a truly appalling figure. Whether such statistics be accurate or not, what factor but social repression could possibly have been responsible for such a violation of the decent mean of Nature? These repressions have been in concentrated action for three generations, and modern psychology leaves no doubt that a normal impulse suppressed from normal expression seeks another outlet in a much more dangerous and unhealthy form. It is probable that the Victorian avoidance of sexual realities has resulted in an accumulation of violence and cruelty in the world whose extent and variety we cannot measure. People put down the outbreak of personal violence in Ireland during recent years to the exacerbation caused by political conditions. But we can never be sure to what extent an arbitrary marriage system is not a contributory cause to eruptions of violence in any country.

The Victorians who argued the cruelty of Nature

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failed to take a leaf out of her book of wisdom. Among a vast number of species, particularly among birds, freedom of matehood, equality of choice and the gentlest love-making are combined with a fidelity that lasts for life. It was not she who made Blake's *Garden of Love* so barren and bound with *her* briars our 'joys and desires.'

Blake, whose philosophy of life may well be called a marriage of natural beauty and truth with human values, also wrote: —

'Joy and pain are woven fine
A garment for the soul divine.'

But we have to add the footnote that at least fifty per cent. of human pain would never have been, if we had been as true to our natural humanity as Nature has been true to herself.

Thus it is the maladjustments of civilized life which produce cruelty, private or public, according to the nature of the inward or social dislocation. Cruelty in a sense is Nature getting her own back — 'expellas furca. . . .' And she will continue to get her own back in singularly unpleasant ways until we admit her on equal terms with our civilized values. Mr. Aldous Huxley, for all the rancid Puritanism which makes his brilliant books so often lectures in moral vivisection, has seen the 'self-destructive' consequences of expelling the human and the natural elements from our civilized midst, and cultivating the artificial at the expense of the normal: —

'If men,' thunders Rampion in *Point and Counter-point*, 'went about satisfying their instinctive desires only when they genuinely felt them, like the animals

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you're so contemptuous of, they'd behave a damned side better than the majority of human beings behave to-day. Leave the instincts to themselves and they'd do very little mischief. If men made love only when they were carried away by passion, if they fought only when they were angry or terrified, if they grabbed at property only when they had need or were swept off their feet by an uncontrollable desire for possession, why, I assure you, this world would be a great deal more like the Kingdom of Heaven than it is under our present Christian – intellectual – scientific dispensation.'

That is a paraphrase of the *Proverbs of Hell*, the ultimate source of true wisdom.

One may risk, therefore, a further definition of cruelty as a by-product of an artificial dualism between body and spirit. Spirit without body takes the form of asceticism; body without spirit takes the forms of acquisitiveness, gluttony, promiscuity, licentiousness, of which the respectables (Nos. 1 and 2) do infinitely the greatest damage. But observe the consequences of this separateness. Asceticism, as we see by old cenobites and new Puritans, is obsessed with the body. The eremites in the desert saw nothing but naked women. The Puritans and authoritarians in lay or religious society misuse their leisure in denouncing, persecuting, suppressing beauty, humanness and love, unless it is orthodox and that they frown on unless it is frigid. All these qualities they identify with the body. On the other hand, the body-followers are always being defeated of

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their own ends. Its fruits in separateness are always dust and ashes to them. That is to say, the ascetic becomes less spiritual, the body-lover alone less bodily, and each is constantly joining hands unconsciously with the other. The flouted body takes its revenge on the spirit, the flouted spirit on the body. Each loses the essence of what it seeks in separateness.

Therefore the dualism between spirit and body is artificial, man-made and in the last century Victorianized. There exists a mysterious desire of the spirit to use the body for its own ends, and of the body to obtain its full flowering through the spirit. This desire for a synthesis between the two elements is a general law of life which operates in every department of it. Thus in art the object is for the idea, the emotion, to become inseparably one with its exterior presentment, and we judge a work of art according to the fusion made between them. So in politics and social life the artificial dualism between the human factor and the abstract idea, the external or institutional fabric, creates endless disharmony and friction. In other words, the idea by losing touch with the human element ceases to be spiritual and becomes wholly material.

The best example of synthesis between these seemingly opposite but essentially interdependent entities is a perfect human love. In a perfect human love the body cannot get on without the spirit nor the spirit without the body, and these combine to form a third element which the follies of human division have not yet permitted to have a name, but which lovers know to be the highest evolution of human possibility.

II

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WHEN the average country-lover thinks of the courtship and mating of birds, he has no alternative but to recall the theory of sexual selection as it was set like cold lard in the third quarter of the last century. As has happened to other of our theories of what goes on in wild Nature, the Darwinians out-Darwined Darwin, and it is only of recent years that the light of experience has corrected the formulæ of hypothesis. The credo of the Darwinian disciple is that birds are to be thought of as automata, each sex of which performs certain quite different functions when the biological routine of the breeding season pulls the trigger. The male is excited to a violent erotic frenzy which he expresses by 'antics' and by displaying his plumage to the most decorative advantage, so that he may obtain possession not of the hen-bird that he 'loves,' but of any female who will yield to his frantic spell-binding.

The hen-bird on her side remains completely passive to the male's advances, but at the same time (a contradiction in terms) exercises choice as to which of her competing suitors she will award the prize of herself. The theory of sexual selection then goes on to declare that she selects the gaudiest or most virile or generally attractive male with whom to mate, with the result that

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the second- and third-raters fail to rear families. This is the story of the evolution of elaborate song and bright plumage through the elimination of the more backward and feeble candidates.

Common sense disposes of some of these postulates, strict observation of others. If they represent a natural law, why is monogamy the prevailing custom in bird-life? For it is only among the polygamous species that a majority of brilliant males court a minority of plain and unresponsive females. Everybody knows how the birds of paradise vibrate and expand their dazzling plumes as they jig along the boughs before the drab, indifferent hens; how the blackcock assemble in 'leks,' a sort of bare arena where the males tread a measure in a tranced ecstasy. But the prosaic grey hens turn their backs upon them, pecking about within the charmed circle of ruffling and capering rivals without taking any apparent notice of the cavaliers wooing them and challenging one another in Pistolian bravado.

The capercaillies fan their tails, tense their throat-feathers and dart out their necks on the Scottish pine-branches; ruffs meet in tournament for the ruffless reeves on the tilting ground; great bustards turn up their whiskers, inflate their pouches, stiffen and vibrate their flecked plumage, leap like marionettes and paw the ground. Other species like them, pea-fowl, for instance, and particularly game-birds, do seem to follow out the rule of the spinsterish, quiescent female and the blindly promiscuous and mechanically desirous male. But there are many exceptions to it even in this class of bird, and Darwin himself has described how the

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pea-hen sometimes courts the cock and how a homespun mallard-duck wooed, won and successfully mated with a male pintail. If, again, the female is endowed with the privilege of choice and uses it, how can she be described as phlegmatic? No cock-bird on this earth can mate with a hen unless Miss Barkis is willin', so that direct force and all the more subtle expedients of pressure so evilly prominent in human life are utterly unknown in bird-life. How, once more, do the theorists of the correct rôles assumed by male and female in the avian courts of love account for the courtship habits of certain species where the female is as passionate and determined a wooer as Anne in *The Devil's Disciple*? She is the literal ruler of the roost. Among the ostriches, rheas, tinamous, phalaropes and hemipodes (bustard-quails), incubation and the education of the young are the charge of the male; among the painted snipe it is the female who is the most resplendent in plumage, while with the phalaropes — Nature's darlings, since she adorns them so comely-wise and hides them away in her wildest retreats — it is the female who is the charmer. He flies and she pursues; she gently and sometimes brusquely presses her suit, passing and repassing before her reluctant love with arching neck, curvetting above him on ceremoniously waved wing and appealingly bowing before a fellow too bashful to be won without all the evasions, subterfuges and make-believe frigidities deemed to be the perquisite of the other sex.

Another supremely important series of love-making truths, very damaging to this cut-and-dried theory, concern the intricacies of mutual courtship, and have

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been brought to light by those great pioneers of discovery in our age – Edmund Selous and Julian Huxley. Birds are undoubtedly more emotional, more temperamental, but less ready to profit by experience than the higher mammals. To mammals the fairy godmother bequeathed the gift of plastic intelligence, to birds that of feeling, and from it to create that radiance of dress, beauty of form, and grace of flight of which the art of loving has been the parent. For into the mating ardour and its high tide of intensity, birds, male *and* female, have packed most of the utilitarian functions of daily life.

Huxley has described the honeymooning of the Louisiana egret. The hen will sit on a branch resting her head for hours on end against the cock's flanks, still, as old Chaucer said, 'as any stone.' Suddenly the pair raise their wings and with solemn, loud cries intertwine their necks in a true lover's knot. Then each bird amorously runs the beak through the raised aigrettes of the other, 'nibbling and chaffering them from base to tip.' Back they sink to their former motionless trance of proximity. When one of them goes food-gathering, the other greets his or her return by crying aloud, rising to full length on the branch, arching and spreading the wings, fanning out the aigrettes and head plumes and bristling the neck feathers. And this mutual love-making continues for month after month, long after the young are hatched and flown. Consider how, according to the law of biological utility (invented by man), those birds were wasting their time! Hours of every day unprofitably

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thrown away in languishment, bushels of nervous energy dissipated in endearments and mutual pleasings! How uneconomic is the art of love!

Huxley has noted how the red-throated divers have elevated and converted their useful powers of diving and swimming under water into 'ceremonials of passion.' The kestrel and peregrine falcon, in their wooing flights, employ their powers of swooping down on their prey for exhibition before their mates, and the Adélie penguins offer the stones they use in nest-building to their lady wives with a stately bow, spreading their flippers sideways the while, then raising their heads as though in stilted worship, and humming. The warblers display with twigs or leaves in their beaks, just as keepsakes and valentines are sacred to human lovers. Great crested grebes will spend hours of the day in bouts of shaking pond-weed before each other, their breasts almost touching and reared up to show the flashing under-surface. Then the weed is nibbled or exchanged and serves as a love-symbol every bit as important and binding to them as a necklace or broken sixpence is to us. The sexual life of birds has, in fact, reached the degree of epigamic development when an extraneous object is invested with emotional associations and so given a kind of life independent of its own value.

If the normal activities of bird-life are thus pressed into the service of making love, not for a day and a night, but for months at a time, it is obvious that courtship and mating cannot be the perfunctory affair of male epilepsy and female acquiescence the Victorian

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dislike of our kinship with the animal kingdom, combined with their ideas of feminine sexual repression, assumed it to be. From this point of view, the courtship of the great crested grebe is wonderfully instructive. In the first place, the female is, if anything, often more 'forward' in wooing than the male, while the rôles of typically masculine and typically feminine are constantly interchanged, just as the most perfect manifestations of human love flower when a man has a feminine tincture in his make-up and a woman something of the masculine salt. Thus, each sex is in a sense the creation and creator of the other, for each in turn enacts the other's part, the female bold and dashing as the male, the male as blandishing as the female.

It is plain, too, that the rhythms of endearment, tenderness and almost ritualist caressing by which the complex hymen of these birds is conducted and prolonged, carries us far beyond the exclusively physical greeds and surrenders of the Victorian theory. The physical element is part and parcel of the biological. Nobody can watch grebe courtship without being struck by its harmonies, as though each bird were acting in a pre-ordained drama, and I defy any unprejudiced observer not to exclaim, 'Why, these birds are in love with each other.' They approach each other with the necks lying along the water, and when breast to breast, leap upright and seem to stamp the surface of the water with their shields gleaming white in heraldic opposition.

The hen-bird catches the dangling weed in her mate's beak, and each bird sways from side to side to,

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as it seems, an unheard melody, or treads water a few steps forward and then back. Or they will throw up their heads, opening and closing their beaks with formal grace, the Elizabethan ruffs outfanned below them. I have seen ravens performing similar motions, and then, joining their beaks, swing to and fro with depressed wings in a kind of blissful enchantment as though their bodies rolled to the monotonous plaint of an Hawaiian folk-tune.

Selous has maintained that the courtship of birds absorbs their functional behaviour to such an extent that it is responsible for nest-building. Thus the nest of the great crested grebe is a bower, a love-couch, what the ancients called a 'thalamum.' The grebes make a love-play out of the materials of the nest, and this is likewise true of lapwings (whose hardly credible powers of madcap wing display are the product of nuptial exaltations), thrushes, blackbirds, rooks, swans, divers, and pre-eminently of the bower-birds, whose ornamental nests are primarily a love-offering. The lapwing advances towards his or her mate in a set, mesmeric attitude, halts, raises the tail and falls into a peculiar rolling motion which scoops out the nesting hollow. Both sexes fall into the same curious hypnosis. So the wheatear spins round like a slow-motion top, crouching in a hollow and plucking and dropping wisps of grass. Nest-building and elaborate and truly æsthetic forms of sexual display have thus developed concurrently out of a formless and primal urge. In 173 out of 212 species of British birds, the male aids the female in constructing the nest, and, if mating and

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nesting are parts of one whole, it is clear that both sexes are equal participants in the fervours and ceremonies of courtship.

Of this truth there are so many examples that it is possible to formulate a general law which radically differs from the Victorian theory. Where the sexes are alike in plumage or one sex is as beautiful as the other, active courtship is mutual. The fact that it is the cock-bird who usually sings offers no real difficulty, because, as Selous has pointed out, all nuptial notes are a kind of song and these are uttered equally by both sexes of a vast number of species. I may even go further and suggest that those species in which the female or the male is the monopolist in courtship are sidetracked off the trunk lines of evolution. These are usually polygamous. In the interchanges of love-making, frequently prolonged long after the young are hatched and certainly resumed in the following season, the male exercises as much choice as the female, and the female as much initiative as the male. Thus the process of sexual selection is a double one and each sex has 'acquired such beauty as it possesses in accordance with the taste and choice of the opposite one.' The theory that the male is wound up to a kind of indiscriminate and mechanical fury, while the female is the apathetic recipient of his attentions, fails to explain why the sexes remain constant, as they surely are more likely to do when they mate by what has been called an 'elective affinity,' formed out of mutual ardour and mutual preference.

Let me give a few more examples of mutuality in the

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lyrics of sound, gesture and colour each sex contributes for the delight of the other. Darwin, with his usual fair-mindedness, has described how the hen capercaillies flit round the males as they parade, and this instance is the more remarkable in that the species is polygamous, and the hens are drabs whose responses are held to be inactive. When the South American jacanas, a species allied to our water-rails, display, male and female vary a rapid fluttering with a slow butterfly-like heave of the wings. The dingy-hued hen blackbird expresses her appreciation of her mate's prancings and posturings by a beatific drooping of the wings. A pair of red-throated divers will both utter a wild epithalamic cry with the neck held arched and rigid, and then with heads and necks lying flat along the water and bodies almost submerged, they advance to meet each other in a series of little plungings.

The manikins have a wooing song and dance in which the cock and hen keep hopping up and down alternately, singing *tolêdo, tolêdo* ('to' at the crouch, 'le' at the spring and 'do' when they alight). Albatrosses will waddle round each other for a quarter of an hour at a stretch, though walking is very arduous for them. Then they will interlace their necks and rub them against each other's downy feathers. The bills are tucked into the wing and then tossed in air with a mixed groan and scream. Like so many long-billed birds, they snap their beaks and join them, blowing out their breasts the while. Mated cranes pursue their amorous exchanges by hopping and skipping about each other, by little pirouettes and more stately minuets. Fulmars

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indulge in mutual languishing motions, while the males and females of the shag tribe display the brilliant gamboge of the mouth for each other's delectation. Why, asks Selous pertinently, should the habit have survived if his revelation of his treasure had not been for her and her similar response for him?

Many instances, again, have been collected of jealousy operating so forcibly among the hens of oyster-catchers, Kentish plovers, redshanks and other species that they will drive an intrusive male right out of the lists of love. This very definite contradiction of passivity or indifference in the female has even been observed among the dowds of polygamous species like blackcock, ruffs and reeves, peafowl and others. It certainly gives birth to a suspicion as to whether the females of any species are ever such lack-lustre, passionless creatures as imperfect observation has described them. There may be other reasons for this seeming lack of interest in the male's desperate devices, and if that is the case, one wonders whether the so-called polygamous species are not rather promiscuous than Oriental in their nuptial customs. And it is unquestionably true that it is the females rather than the males of some species where love is shared and active in both sexes who open the ceremonies by making emotional advances to their partners.

The whole problem is one of unique interest, because in love between the sexes mankind is nearer to the birds than to the mammals. It is only among birds and men that courtship reaches an emotional and psychical complexity lacking to mammals and the more

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lowly organized members of the animal kingdom. When we study the mating habits of birds whose courtship is mutual and who pair for life, one is forced to the conclusion that men and women only differ from males and females of the wild birds (domesticated animals are nearly always degenerate) in three respects. Mankind has been released from the biological tyranny of the mating season in the first place. Secondly, men and women bring or rather are capable of bringing a higher mental evolution and a more subtle play of emotion to their love-making than is possible to birds. And, thirdly, our natural feelings have been modified, sometimes out of all recognition and not infrequently to the heavy detriment of human values, by our social institutions. But these are differences not of kind but of degree.

The Victorians made their great mistake when they attempted to separate the loves of men and birds as different in kind. As Selous has written with such passionate irony: —

‘ There must be no preferences, no love-matches here (namely, in the kingdom of birds). All must be in obedience to a blind sexual instinct, something very animal, about which we, of course, know nothing. Unlike ourselves, the female brute must be ready to mate with any male brute chance may throw in her way, and, if it throw several, she must be absolutely impartial between them, there being neither looks, soul nor money for her to found a choice on. Therefore she will go to the strongest and know no better,

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for love she knows not, nor can parental authority and filial obedience combine here to give the preference to riches or title, coupled with age or disease.'

When the Victorians elaborated the theory of the sexually excited cock-bird (as though he were a kind of rotary machine stimulated by a biological accelerator) and the passive hen-bird (as though she were a kind of inanimate lightning-conductor), were they more influenced by the society of the time than they would have cared to admit? Is the 'coyness' of women an institutional rather than a natural endowment, and is the axiom that man is the wooer and woman the wooed a passing phase of social convention? At any rate, a study of the mating habits of birds lends no support to it, for what we call 'equality of the sexes' is the predominant law in that kingdom, and it is highly probable that the permanence of union which is so striking a character among so many species is the consequence of that equality, which takes the form not of competition between the sexes in the feministic fashion, but of mutual co-operation and an equal ardour in the joys of matehood. When our grandmothers submitted to the cruel laws of Victorian marriage, either they were acting a part in obedience to male domination and the repressive standards of conduct then prevailing or the 'marriage of convenience' left them permanently unlit. Such passivity was at that time deemed a virtue.

The courtship of birds shows us a better way. The biological urge of the sexual instinct has undergone such a development that the brilliant colours; the

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exquisite graces of flight and movement in the air, where migration or food-catching is not the motive; melody; ornamental structural characters; prolonged rites of courtship and mating; equal ardours, affections and constancy have all been built up from this primary force. When we on our plane ally the instinct with which we are born to the spiritual on the one hand and the natural on the other, the experience of great men and of great lovers has often proved that there is no real disharmony between them. Let us take off our hats to the birds who have shown us on their plane what possibilities in the co-operation of heaven and earth are open to us on ours. We may paraphrase Wordsworth's line on the skylark as, 'True to the kindred points of heaven and earth.'

III

TWO SPARROWS AND A FARTHING

NO subject, I would like to begin this article, is so littered with ignorance, prejudice and confusion as that of the economic status and utility of wild birds. Unfortunately, I am unable to think of any other subject concerned with the values, material or spiritual, of life which is not equally clogged with the same importunate interferences. The reasons are not far to seek: Nowadays we – and by ‘we’ I mean those powerful enough to do so – interfere with everything. It is an age of interference, and has been so for a hundred years. At the same time, we are martyrs to certain abstractions – ‘Progress,’ ‘The Conquest of Nature,’ ‘Morality,’ ‘Science,’ and a round dozen of others. We are too much in a hurry to pause and ask ourselves what we mean by these words, and whether the results we achieve by them are worth while. We pursue these abstractions because they are a means to power, and the acquisition of power, which, of course, implies interference, is the main object of Western civilization. Such questions as the values of power, whether it makes people wiser or happier, and what use we are to make of it when we have got it, are pure irrelevancies. The object of life is power; the means to acquire it are institutional or mechanical, and the driving-force to achieve power is love of power.

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This is no idle excursion away from our theme. The interrelationship between birds and vegetation is an exceedingly intricate mechanism which took Nature millions of years of experiment and labour before just the right balances and adjustments were in proper working order. Up to the nineteenth century, man's dealings with Nature did not affect the equilibrium very materially. Changes in the relative abundance of certain species over others, variations in the food habits of birds living in the neighbourhood of man, were inevitable consequences of the invention of agriculture. But it cannot be said that these changes amounted to a serious dislocation of natural balances. Birds and crops and insects went on playing their respective parts in the complex interplay of natural economy. Then came the nineteenth century, the unprecedented advances of the sciences, the discovery of a new deism ('The Conquest of Nature'), and the capacity, extended to a large number of people, of taking life very much more expeditiously and comfortably than ever was possible before in the history of mankind.

These new powers were not, however, accompanied by any corresponding advance in sanity, wisdom or good feeling. Man, in other words, was given a new lease of power without any but the dimmest idea of how to use it. Consequently he misused it, as any child will make mischief with a revolver if he gets the chance of handling it. The way that the last century handled its new powers was to make chaos of that infinitely delicate mechanism, commonly known as the 'Balance of Nature,' and which means the mutual interdepend-

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ence of all forms of life upon each other scaled to that nicety where no one type, genus or species of living thing preponderates to the disadvantage or exclusion of another.

The great dislocation happened in so many different ways that I shall not even try to give more than a very few cursory examples. In order to enable tired stock-brokers to kill game-birds in large numbers and without too much trouble, the gamekeepers made havoc among the birds of prey, with the result that mice and voles and sparrows exultantly multiplied to such an extent that the farmers began to lose hundreds of tons of crops and roots every year. The decline of agriculture, precipitated during the twentieth century, was made the occasion ten years ago of a concentrated offensive against the very birds who made a livelihood out of its hosts of insect foes. A war of extermination was waged against the birds that frequent orchards because some of the fruit was pecked by some of the birds. It never occurred to the zealous fruit guardians to inquire into the feeding habits of these birds over the rest of the year, and so to estimate to what extent the amount of fruit consumed or spoiled by them was compensated or overborne by their checks to the inconspicuous and far more insidious insect larvæ who could only achieve maturity on a fruit diet. Yet it is certain that if the popping of those well-intentioned guns in the orchards had not been at last partially silenced by the passionate efforts of a few intelligent observers, fruit cultivation in this country would have perished with its insectivorous defenders.

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Since it will be tedious to multiply such instances, I will wind up this census of the Kingdom of the Blind with two very striking illustrations. One concerns the world-famous Guano Islands off the coast of Peru. These islands were once inhabited by species of gannet, pelican, cormorant, tern, petrel and shearwater in such countless numbers that they passed to and fro between them like scudding clouds before a sou'wester, and hid the eternally blue heavens. In the course of centuries such huge deposits of bird-droppings were accumulated that the isles actually rose many feet higher from the sea. The value of the guano deposit as a fertilizer for the barren fields of the mainland plain between the coast and the Andes was greatly enhanced by the aridity of the atmosphere, and it was through these birds that the ancient Incas accomplished such prodigies of making the desert fruitful. Consequently, they were very strictly protected by the archaic Children of the Sun. In the middle of the Victorian period, however, the islands were ceded by a corrupt administration to various British and European firms. A time of cut-throat competition ensued. Coolies, slaves in all but name, were imported in British ships to die by suicide and overwork in such numbers that they became mummified in the guano, the birds nested in their empty skulls and the modern diggers find cartloads of human bones. In the scramble for guano and nothing but guano the birds who supplied it were killed off by the hundred thousand. When a wiser government took over the islands after a fury of carnage and exploitation lasting for nearly fifty years, only about one-tenth of the

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most economically valuable birds in the whole world remained to scream the good news of the exploits of progress to the new century. And to-day the existence of Peru as a nation practically depends upon the regular supply of guano dug out of the desolate rocks sticking out of the Humboldt current, with its super-abundant wealth of marine life for the birds and sea-lions to feed upon.

The second illustration is like a parable from Hans Andersen. For many years all manner of boards, councils, conferences, associations, committees, assemblages and other black-coated teams have been vociferating to a mighty crescendo that, as many a sea-bird lives on fishes, and fishes were obviously created for the sole purpose of entering the stomach of man alone, a holy war must be declared on the fish-eating birds. It was calculated that since an average of twenty-five birds a day was captured by the St. Andrews fishermen among the shoals, these birds must dispose of 26,880,000 fishes per annum. The fact that only a certain proportion of the finny tribes are food-fishes, and that even the abandoned gulls, terns, cormorants, puffins, guillemots and razorbills could not be fishing all day long and every day, did not prevent the appalling question being asked — if twenty-five birds can consume this mountain of fish in a year, what of the birds round the entire British coast? A similar agitation fermented for years on the East Coast, where it was demanded that, since terns had increased at Blakeney Point in Norfolk and the flat-fish had decreased, these flying feys must die. Forty-eight were killed and sent

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up for stomach analysis to Dr. Collinge. Not a bone, not the tiniest fragment of flat-fish, was discovered in a single one. Yet before protection was accorded to terns and certain other sea-birds on our coasts, the coastal bird-homes at the end of last century resembled a battlefield. Analyses of other fish-eating birds (nineteen species) were made, and it was found that only forty-five per cent. of their food was piscine.

But the point of the story is that in 1883 Huxley had declared that all the principal food-fisheries – cod, mackerel, herring and others – were ‘inexhaustible,’ while later investigators have corroborated his verdict to the effect that ‘no action of man or bird can make any appreciable difference to the plenitude of fish’ – such is the overwhelming fecundity of the ocean. The irony is the more pointed from the fact that it has been the bird-accusers themselves who have been responsible for the excessive wastefulness of the fishing industry in the destruction of millions of useless young plaice by the trawlers. All the sea-bird battues, all the reports, all the expenditure of money, argument and foolish greeds that made them boiled down to a vanity of nothingness from the simple fact that the sea provides and always will provide more than enough for all, men and birds and porpoises and dolphins and seals and sharks and dog-fishes alike.

It is, indeed, literally impossible to estimate the magnitude of the destruction in wild life, of the impoverishment of Nature and of the losses to agriculture for which the acquisitive elements nurtured by the industrial revolution are responsible. It is not a very

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comforting thought that such losses might have been avoided if we had known nothing about Nature at all, but if good feeling had taken the place of lack of knowledge. Injurious species of bird, that is to say, are in so small a minority that had they been protected together with the beneficial species purely out of sentiment, we should to-day have been materially the richer for it. In the light of such a fact it is odd that the illusion should persist that what are called 'sentimental considerations' are impractical.

On the other hand, the voices of the few urging us to observe the poetic justice of that lack of sympathy which drove us to 'conquer' Nature at the price of so many disasters are nowadays beginning to be heard. In many different ways our fatal interference with the slowly perfected adjustments of Nature has produced harmful repercussions. Not the least of them is the wilful creation of a mass of highly complicated problems which never existed before we tipped over the natural balances of wild life. The life of Nature is an interwoven pattern of strands; break one and others come apart, and they in their turn introduce confusion into other sections of the fabric. Various blunderings through it, for instance, have caused a wholly disproportionate increase of that brisk little urchin, the house sparrow. In agricultural districts seventy-five per cent. of the sparrow's food is cereals, and only five per cent. injurious insects. He gorges on ripe crops; he usurps the nesting sites of more desirable species; he riots among the flowers and his mobs have the same general effect on bird-life that the standardized

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herd-mind has upon human society. He depreciates the qualitative currency of bird-life. Yet it is impossible now to shrink his numbers to their natural balance with those of other species by artificial means. Even cats, which destroy something like fifty per cent. of our garden birds every year, do not sensibly diminish the sparrow hosts.

On the other hand, we reduce birds like the corn-crake, that Samson among the insect cereal-devourers, to such scarcity that the species is near that margin of resistance when it, as it were, loses heart and fades automatically into extinction. Moreover, in order to redress this topsy-turvydom of common and uncommon species, we have elaborated a system of bird-protection laws which nobody understands, nobody enforces and nobody observes. Our birds are far better protected to-day than in those havocking Victorian days, not by the cumbrous machinery of the law, but the steady growth and widening of a delight in their beauty, animation and a kind of celestial quality they have about them.

Poetic justice has overtaken our prideful shortsightedness in another direction. The plagues of Egypt are always on the horizon; the rustle of their champing mouths might well drown even the din of our mechanical civilization. It has been estimated that the passerine birds of the eastern half of Nebraska destroy 162,771,000 locusts a day. The average locust weighs 15 grains, and consumes its own weight of cereals every day. In a year this number would devour 174,397 tons of crops, worth nearly two million dollars.

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In the Abruzzi, locusts move in such earth-darkening swarms as occasionally to hold up the trains between Rome and Avezzano. An ornithologist has worked out that a pair of gipsy moths, if unchecked, would beget enough offspring in eight years to destroy the entire foliage of the United States. The chinch bug, a potato glutton and a favourite food of the quail, can accommodate 20,000 of its numbers on eight inches of grass-stalk. Or listen to this! If a hop aphid succeeded in developing thirteen generations in a single year, the brood, if marshalled in line, would extend to a point so remote in space that light, travelling at the rate of 184,000 miles per second, would take 2500 years to reach the earth from the head of the procession.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the early settlers of Salt Lake City erected a monument to Franklin's Gull for clearing their wheat-fields of the crickets that threatened them with starvation. One rookery of the Australian straw-necked ibis (*Carphibis spinicollis*) was calculated to have digested 482,000,000 grasshoppers alone in one year. Taking into consideration the fearful prolificacy of insects, we need not wonder that Mr. Chapman of the American Museum of Natural History declared that 'If we should lose our birds, we should lose our forests,' when 500 species of insect prey upon the oak alone. Take a few percentages of the insect food some of our more familiar birds feed their nestlings on: Starling, 90 per cent.; song-thrush, 96 per cent.; blackbird, 60 per cent.; great tit, 90 per cent.; skylark, wren, yellow-hammer, blue tit and chaffinch, 100 per cent. Add to this the fact that the nestlings are fed at

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intervals of from a half to a full minute with a beakful from sunrise to sunset, and the statement that if the entire bird-stock of the world were to be annihilated, the earth would become totally barren of vegetation in three years will not appear so extravagant as it sounds. Of course, a certain proportion of the insects eaten by birds (the ichneumon fly, for instance) themselves prey upon the noxious members of the insect multitudes, and though it is highly immoral of them, birds do not discriminate between them. Man, too, invents ingenious artificial devices to check the invading hordes. But on an all-round view, a working knowledge of the interrelations between birds, crops and insects shows that the practice of destroying the former on a large scale is one not of Nature-conquerors, but of lunatics. A swelling of the insect legions follows upon a diminution of bird-life as all effects follow upon their contingent causes.

Another ill effect of crashing through the subtle architectural poises of Nature is our habit of sticking moral labels on birds as a porter registers trunks to different destinations. That is a very difficult tendency to combat, for the impulse to persecute loves to walk clothed in self-righteousness and we can be as cruel as we like if our victims are moralized as wicked. So we speak of 'good' birds and 'bad' birds when what we really mean is birds that live on different types of diet. We have inherited this fallacy from the Victorians, who regarded Nature as a kind of sadistic murderer and whose passion for calling her names and blaming her for our own muddles and misdeeds has done immeasurable

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harm. In estimating, therefore, what the farmer owes to his bird friends and loses to his bird foes, let us avoid giving a bird a bad name because its digestion is adapted more to fruit and vegetables than to animal food.

Actually there is an extremely simple way out of all the artificial complications of economic ornithology. Thanks to the researches of Dr. Collinge ('The Food of some British Wild Birds') and others, we know precisely how birds stand to the farmer and how the farmer should stand to birds. The 'volumetric' method, that of averaging the total food of a given species in different districts and all the year round by examination of the crops of various individuals of it, clearly reveals that the great majority of species are beneficial to man. Seventy per cent. of the food eaten by the lapwing, which agriculturists have allowed to become reduced so seriously from its former abundance, consists of the wireworms, leather-jackets, weevils, myriapods and coleoptera which live entirely upon the fruits of the field. The woodpeckers, shot for the damage to trees attributed to them, devour the ash, pine and bark weevils, the longicorns, leopard, clearwing and tortrix moths which spend their larval stages in riddling timber which the birds themselves never touch except for the purpose of extracting these pests. Seventy-five per cent. of the total woodpecker food consists of these insects. And so the lugubrious tale runs on from species to species.

To this general rule that nearly all our British species do far more good than harm to our agriculture and fruit-growing there are eleven exceptions, which have to be

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differently graded. The rook and the starling are more injurious than beneficial in certain areas because our interferences with the web of natural life have increased their numbers out of all proportion to their natural rate of reproduction where the checks and balances of the wild are in operation. The house sparrow, the ring, stock and rock doves and the bullfinch certainly do more harm than good to fruit, cereal and garden cultivation. But the bullfinch and the rock dove are uncommon birds and the aggregate harm they do is shrunk to a little measure by the paucity of their numbers. With the bullfinch, beautiful alike in his plumage as English in his colouring, his music and his devotion to his mate, good feeling and love of beauty should have the last word. The sparrow hawk, blackbird, greenfinch and chaffinch are partially harmful in varying degrees. The greenfinch, for instance, enjoys freshly sown seed and is a distributor of various weeds which, unconscious little green knight with his toy golden sword, he cannot help. The sparrow hawk accounts for rather too many insectivorous birds, though he reduces the numbers of sparrows and starlings. But he is not really a serious problem, partly because the gamekeepers wage such merciless war against this poor Ishmael and partly because birds of prey only secure the weaker members of their natural food-birds and so help to preserve the vigour of the stock. The black one of the woodland Pan-pipes with 'orange-tawny bill' devotes 25 per cent. of his total dietary to the fruits he is luckless enough to enjoy as much as we do. On the other hand, 22 per cent. of his yearly sum of meals consists of injurious insects.

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The chaffinch's bill of fare is 56 per cent. of weed-seeds, 16 per cent. of injurious insects, 1 per cent. of beneficial insects, 4 per cent. of fruit buds and 8 per cent. of cereals, so that it is difficult to assess which has the better of it – the cloud or the silver lining.

Hence the reduction of the superabundant species has to be moderately and scientifically undertaken, while those which are not plentiful should be allowed to contribute their glow to the prism of life. To exterminate a species on any account whatever or reduce it to a perilous rarity is a crime unpardonable, and even with the house sparrow and the wood-pigeon, who do vastly more harm than all the other nine species put together and multiplied by ten, we owe it to the creative power of life and evolution (what used to be called 'the glory of God') to depress their numbers humanely and courteously. The winter wood-pigeons have to be shot because they are immigrants, but the true method of reducing too abundant species and so restoring balances is to remove their eggs and diminish the available number of nesting sites.

Our legislation, which is usually a hundred years or more behind contemporary enlightenment, should follow suit by repealing all protection laws at present in pseudo-force and passing a single comprehensive Act protecting the eggs and persons of all wild species excepting (I quote Dr. Collinge) 'such as are known to be too numerous or injurious.' This 'black list' should be strictly subject to local conditions and to constant revision, while the nine, ten or eleven species on it should be safeguarded from indiscriminate, wanton or ill-

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judged destruction. If we were to carry out this simple measure, we could in time undo an imponderable amount of mischief both to Nature and ourselves, enjoy our birds and our crops together and hear a great deal less of that overdriven expression, 'economic ornithology.'

IV

MARE SACRUM

A. — MARE SACRUM

DECIDEDLY, the ritual moment did not come off. I was well prepared for it too. I had dabbled about on that visionary shore for years till every cell in my mind was stored to bursting with the enchanted freights of the sacred sea. My head was a wildly variegated cosmopolis of Cretan sailors feeling for the Pillars of Hercules, the Children of the Sun unloading their bales of lore and cult as they hugged the northern shore, mastodon and mammoth crowding from Africa over their narrow land-bridge, greedy Carthaginians who knew Salammbo and the Cassiterides, Romans, Visigoths, Saracens, Hoopoes, Golden Orioles, Blue Trains, Aucassin, Popes perambulating between Avignon and Rome, castled counts of prodigal name and deed, the translunary courts of love, the personal column of *The Times* with figures in it almost as dreamlike, so that even they mingled their dreary pomp in the barbaric farrago, the cyclonic swarm of memories stampeding my anticipations with their overwhelming vivacity. In Hyères, I had learned, all the sparrows were serins, and I think that a purse-proud wintering spinster would have been apparelled in a quasi-celestial light had I known she came fresh (as Flora) from a villa on the coast of azure. And now it was my

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turn, as it had been Petrarch's. I too was shortly to gaze upon that ghostly, immemorial sea of exultations, agonies and all the other great allies.

What I saw was a giant coloured picture-postcard, new as paint from a Brobdingnagian stationer's, and there was nothing more. I turned my dismayed eyes inland and there were mean whitish mountains of uncouth and violent shapes, desolate as the craters of the moon and with as much grandeur about them as a dismantled wedding-cake. It looked as though the fabled giants of the Mediterranean, that in the days of my illusion had almost lovingly possessed my fancy, had been wantonly knocking hunks off them with a club. The ornamental valleys were just litter: here a row of cypresses, a thin black line at halt; here patches of rock sticking out of the arid soil; here striations of truncated vines with their grotesque coral-like limbs starkly protruded; here a tree; there a gaunt house with blind blue shutters. It was all very nice and foreign-looking, but the trouble was that nothing belonged to anything else. There were no continuities, blendings, relationships. It was not so much a land as a mantelpiece roughed off at the sea and fixed on to the badly distempered wall of the mountains. The eye took grasshopper leaps from object to object. If this was the Riviera, then, ladies and gentlemen from Eaton Square, Provençal Castle and Minoan Labyrinth, you have been welcome to it. Personally, I would as soon be at Cheltenham Spa.

But endless are the caprices of experience, and when I think of the Riviera now, it is through the medium of Shelley's poem, 'The Question,' and of one I used to

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know. The fact is that I found the *locus consecratus* of that poem, and of her delicate wild graces and ardour of living, a strange transmutation in terms of flowers and a stream hurrying, pausing, loitering through the defiles of the hills to a sea stained in Tyrian dye. The hills were as solitary as was her spirit on its formal stage, and clothed in the uniform dark-green scrub of the 'maquis,' the haunt of that large lizard with quaking pouch and Jurassic eye which used to stare at me as though I were a queerer beast to it than its old friend, the iguanodon. Granite, scrub and lizards – and no sound flickered into the wilderness. No sound at all except the muted warble rakishly jetted from the minute dark heath-Puck we barely know in England as the Dartford Warbler and whose ruby eye gazed upon crest after crest, peak after peak of the cloud-plumaged mountains.

At the foot of these hills ran the stream with a lower, warmer music of its own, and touching its shores into such creation as it passed that you might almost say its ripples thought. The brook was as clear as though it streamed out of the heart of some classic fable and wound through its valleys like the perpetual surprises of life. Huge tongues of rock forced it into narrow channels where it chattered in freshets; little beaches of sand and star-dust mica pushed their crescents into its waters; it took a bite out of the land with a bay for the fleet of Queen Mab and went on to become a pool deep in quietude except for the roaming of the water-boatman, and passed on again to its falls and a new cadence at such adventurous *mignardise*. And every-

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where flowers, flowers, 'azure, black and streaked with gold,' fairer than ever my wakened eye beheld, flowers that reminded me of those forms and hues I had known in my concrete life, and so did not carry me too far into the land of Luthany, the region Elenore. They were roses and vetches and orchises and papilions and lilies, charmed, translated, to be engarlanded in thought with amaranth and asphodel, but still retained to the familiar. They were not yet visionary; they knew both worlds. Only the ardent marigold remained the same, but then there is no world, legendary or fey, that would not shine the brighter for its earthly presence. Lodden lilies drooped their mild-beaming globes over the stream, and the rose and palest lavender petals of another lily enfolded golden stamens. The lavender itself rose to four feet and blazed with purple flowers like butterflies, but just alighted on the terminals of the stalks. But the wild mignonette was a pigmy of elfland, since almost every flower had here found a new rhythm to change its wonted appearance, and neighbouring bushes of the cistus, whose crumpled discs, all-Danæ to the sun, seemed that moment to have been born, were white and mauve and coffee-coloured. The same papilion would change from vinous and blue to cream and then fawn within the same patch of ground, and in a like uprush of life that played with colours like the variations of genius upon a folk-tune, the grape-hyacinth melted from azure to white.

The finder of a salmon-pink orchis ought to feel himself a member of the Order of the Black Tulip, and here they were in multitudes – a dædal flower with a

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long drooped lip marginally folded and making a mystic triple curve before it ran to a point. The upper petals were lanceolate and upright, one star-point taller behind the other and both from the same base as the lip, while the outside of the flower was veined in rose and the inside dusted with a faint down that shone in the sun like a Milky Way of the Little World. At hand was a witchery in golden-brown of the same species, and next door in this town flosculum of many mansions was a heartsease of lemon yellow with a central circlet of black. In corners among the stones were lawnlets sown by splashes from the cascades with Lilliputian vetches and papilions, some red, some milk-white and tipped with madder streaks, some sap-green with supporting petals of a bee-like glossy blackish-brown. Between these magic plots and the bushes and boulders hopped emerald grasshoppers, whisked tiny dragons in greeny-brown, droned flies on black-edged emerald wings, careened butterflies in orange. Long grasses, white-flowered maquis spreading into domes, tall tuberose, the candled broom, cistus, kingcups, yellow comfrey, wide-eyed periwinkle and honesty twice itself, lavender, dog-rose and marigold – each had room, each lent value to the others and all put forth their choric might of floribundity.

It looked like virtue to me, virtue the greatest and commonest since nearly all animate life, plants and beasts and men, could be partakers in its sacrament – the virtue of positive being translated into beauty. Hardest and greatest of all for men, since they must reconcile their natural with their conscious selves. And

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so in that wild foreign garden where exuberance was beauty I remembered one I used to know whose flowers of being made such a garden, that was Shelley's 'The Question' but for the title and the last line. That was the enchanted freight I brought back from the sacred sea.

B. - BIRDS OF THE SOUTH

There is a shy quaint pleasure in feeling oneself a foreigner, especially if unaccustomed to other lands than one's own. Englishmen lose the essence of the travelling spirit when they think of themselves, as they almost invariably do, as us English among foreigners, when in concrete fact they are foreigners among natives. But when one's own land is more than a place of cities inhabited by human swarms all speaking the same familiar tongue, when its natives include many with paws and feathers, to spy out those of a foreign land becomes one of the more certain sources of human joy.

The eagerness of this uprooted naturalist will seek its main gratification in peopling the memory with new species. But on the Riviera at any rate his first impression will be of home species, only so different in their habitat and actually in their manners and customs that the sensation of a new world of birds is constantly titillated. Even the hurrying unsooted sparrow lacks his old familiar face. The distribution of our companionate birds is also shifted to such an extent that one's Newfoundland is ever present. I once saw the jackdaw circling above the blunt Italianate walls of an old castle warded by cypresses and realized with a queer

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thrill that I was looking on one of the rarest birds of the Riviera. The only birds whose omnipresence shows no change are chaffinches, greenfinches and great tits, who love the gnarled olive groves on the slopes of the foothills between mountain and sea. But it is surprising how very rarely one sees a single one of any of them. Their notes sail and mingle down the wind, but the gleam of a wing is all that feeds the eye.

The shyness and wildness of our semi-tame species in the South are indeed so marked that their psychology has been radically altered. In April, most of our migrant species from Africa have congregated upon what is still unbedizened of the Provençal coast and their numbers are at least as abundant as they will be in England a fortnight later. Yet how disappointing is their morning chorus, how fugitive the sight of them! This is, of course, the result of persecution. Birds do not live their natural lives in the South of France. They are in fact suppressed, just as human beings are by fear, convention, authority, pressure of circumstance and what not. Their attention is taken up with concealing themselves, in keeping a sharp look-out, in darting rapidly from place to place, and this is so much wastage in the art of living. A secondary set of faculties is sharpened at the expense of a primary one and the impingement of the external world in the fear of the chasseur makes a constant clash between the play of conflicting sensory reactions, a conflict which I often saw in action. Love-making, nest-building, meal-times, adventures through the shades and enjoyments in the sun, these become entangled in and broken by fears.

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Hear the blackbird fluting, not in some dappled copse or tended garden plot, but far away from the depths of the dark green maquis wilderness. It is not distance which makes you listen in vain for the confused chucklings which invariably accompany his English wood notes. It is because he dare not sing himself out; his restless vigilance snips off his music before it is well begun. Who could conceive that this whirl of wings and dive of furtive shape through the angled branches of the cork trees is our own brazen English thrush inviting a whole declining sun to himself from the topmost tip of the tallest tree. Strange too it is to catch the spring tinkle of the blue tit and the yaffle's wake of laughter among the sombre forests of the cistus and know that these sounds are far rarer than the gleeful pert warble of the grey-black furze-wren, a bird that the English naturalist goes out for to see at the price of much weary tramping, patience and bitter disappointments. In the wilder parts of southern Provence, this ruby-eyed mite in a red waistcoat is as common as our robin and his ferocious scold sounds darkling out of the maquis thickets almost every hundred yards or so. I remembered W. H. Hudson's vain search for a bird he perhaps loved best in our more tolerant kingdom of them when I saw this gallant little warbler in many a chance setting dear for retrospection – perched on a twig suspended over a steep valley with ridge after ridge of stark mountain for background, or moustached with minute flies for his young, or leaping from bush to bush in engaging parabolas of flight, or, as I once saw him, his dark form peering out of a small broom, a fortune

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of festival gold from the root upward. One bright day the nightingales arrived over the Madonna-blue sea and every grove, every shadowed slope, every valleyed stream was alive with them. Yet though they sang nearly all day long, except for that startling hush of noon which gives the naturalist a wondering sense of being in some far tropic land, I never once heard a southern nightingale who gave of his English best. The swifts were arriving well before the middle of April, and as they would not appear in England until about a fortnight later, they must travel the length of their journey from Africa many scores of times over before their wild unearthly screaming startles our year into May.

But the foreigners, the birds we never or very rarely see in England, to discover them is a more thrilling sport than all Switzerland can furnish, and one passes the old Latin tag — *omne ignotum pro magnifico* — across one's lips with a distinct softening towards the old misspent days of learning Latin. One day, as I was wandering in a pine grove mingled with those imposing pyramidal trees with leaves of dusted bloom which I learned later to be eucalyptus, I saw a tree-creeper. Now our own tree-creeper is so full of insular prejudice that he never leaves our shores. So this must have been the southern short-clawed tree-creeper, and though I could detect absolutely no difference in plumage, action or appearance between him and his English relative, oh, to quote the bard, the difference to me! On my very first day in the South, I discovered a new bird frequenting the olive and cork trees in, as it seemed to me, multitudes.

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But that was because they were all crazy in voice, in gesture and in self-advertisement. This was the serin, a small greenish-yellow striped finch whom I came upon in the midst of his ardours of courtship. The word 'antics' has always struck me as a trifle vulgar when used of the loves of birds, but its aptness for the serin's clownish wooings could not be gainsaid. He takes his perch upon an olive bough and tumbles his body on outstretched wings from side to side in a swaying motion of such absorbed ecstasy that only, it seems, the power of love can keep him from toppling backwards to the ground.

But this is not enough; the cascade of passion coursing through his nerves hurls him into the air, whereon he drifts to and fro like an intoxicated leaf in a battle of the breezes, waving his wings up and down the while as though exhibited in a slow-motion film. These odling birds do indeed lose themselves, as the lapwing loses himself when he plunges headlong from his pinnacle of air to within a foot of dashing himself to pieces on the earth. In the southern April, the serin does for a time go mad with glee, love and pugnacity and in his astonishing inconsequences becomes wholly oblivious to the facts of the external world. I make an incautious movement and suddenly he remembers; a draught of polar recognition of those facts whips away his tipsy blisses and in a moment he has become a furtive, vigilant fugitive. All the time while he is in his trance, his song pours out of his quivering throat in a barely inflected interminable rush of shrilling, buzzing, cicada-like music, nearest to the call-notes of our tits, but

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louder, more vivacious, less pleasing to the ear. But who would wish the serin to charm the listener with more harmonious numbers? His volleyings are perfectly in keeping with his peculiar love-making, which, for all its eccentricity, has that touch of endearing magic in it which rapture always and alone can give.

One of the excitements of this Newfoundland in sight of the sea that washes Africa, and during the full tide of migration, was that I never knew what I was going to see or hear next. One day I walked through the olive grove, in which by this time I believed I knew every resident, and heard a new voice which fell upon me in no secret, elusive fashion, but smote upon my ears. It was a resonant, powerful, vehement song with a great variety of notes in it, one or two of them quite parrot-like and very different from any song I had ever heard before. The music had no softness in it; it issued from the olive trees in plangent waves of sound, as though the singer had been discontented with all the tender melodies of familiar bird song and had burst a musical revolution upon this southern land. Yet, try as I would, and though the grove at this place was fairly open and without thick undergrowth, I never caught even a momentary glimpse of the bird as it slipped from one tree to another without once exposing itself to my craning and peering. Art thou bird or but a wandering voice? More fitting, indeed, for the orphean warbler than the blundering cuckoo, since such a voice might well restore ghosts to the day.

A bird of the high lonely places who led a scolding and skulking existence creeping about in the under-

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growth of the uniform dark maquis was the Mediterranean warbler, and much exasperation did I spend before identifying him with his bullfinchy shape, rich glossy black head, olive-brown back and a conspicuous white throat very similar to that of our own bird so named. But at times he got tired of throaty expostulation, swung up into the sun upon a prominent twig and emitted a sweet, hurried, abrupt, wild warble in the gesticulatory manner and with something of the staccato effect of the whitethroat, who is possibly a distant cousin of his. Then, propelled by his own emotional reactions, he flew up a little nearer to the sun and delivered his stave (zig-zagging like free verse) on vibrating wings that slowly descended back to his perch. So many of these southern birds were in the habit of this air-singing that one became inclined to the theory that the power and brilliance of the sunlight exercises a levitational effect upon birds forced by persecution to live so much in concealment.

But the bird that caught into his own splendid person all the imagined wizardry of the South was the hoopoe. His very name is like a charm. This fabled bird, who once screened the sun from the head of Mohammed, is about the size of a blackbird and of a wonderful cinnamon colour, with wings and lower back barred in broad bands of black and white. The long bill is curved and the erectile crest tipped with black. When I first saw the hoopoe resting like a carved figure on the naked bough of a fig-tree, it was a perfectly obvious thought that here was the tutelary spirit of that Spenserian olive grove which he frequented. One would have

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to be a collector for whom life is spelt in terms of death to call to mind his species, his genus, his metatarsal measurements. It is an Arabian Nights bird and, being painted on Cretan and Egyptian monuments, possesses like hawk and ibis a supernatural pedigree of symbolism that makes it older in men's thoughts than the Olympians. I could hardly believe my eyes when I once saw the mystic hoopoe plodding about on the grass swallowing woodlice and centipedes like a farmyard fowl, and I waited in the full hope that he would, according to his wont, presently toss the wrigglers up in the air and catch them in his curving bill. The flight is at once jay- and yaffle-like; leisurely like the jay's when he crosses an open space on wings as rounded but without the beautiful rayed design, and with them often furled on a downward undulation after the manner of the yaffle. Sometimes he forgets that he is not living an immortal being in the pages of the *Faerie Queene*, for the passion to display his singular beauty seizes upon him and he will select a clear space, highroad or vineyard patch, to cross in irregular angles and with all his brilliance on show.

Not less enchanting are the notes for which he is named. On a day expanded like a butterfly's wings to the sun's meridian, when the earth breathed a subtle languorous odour, the sulphur butterflies coquetted in mutual love-flights, the drone of bees mingled with little noiseless noises among the pines, the air was tranced in heat and sea and sky were confounded in a vaporous mid-world, I lay on a sun-baked rock and heard the hoopoe chanting his native love-notes all day long. It is an owl-like *hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo*, invariably in my experience

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repeated four times, and punctuated now and then by a heron-like squark. After I had passed some hours in my painted rock-room of juniper, cistus, lavender and broom, it at last struck upon my bemused senses that the hoopoe was the cuckoo of the South. The four notes, unlike the cuckoo's two, are repeated in the same deep fluting key, but the intervals are the same and the melodious call continues as tirelessly, so that it becomes one with the very rhythm of creation. It is this tirelessness in the cuckoo's song which made Wordsworth feel it as the disembodied voice of the spirit of nature itself. But the hoopoe's note is more calming, mellower in tone and touched with melancholy. This is indeed how I think of these Oriental birds, lost from an older, brighter world, flying between legend and reality and vested in a splendour all forlorn. In the South of France, all birds have a poor time of it at the hand of man, but I do not know that we have much to boast of when every attempt of this magnifico to colonize our land is met with a charge of shot.

The olive grove was tenanted before I left with three pairs who spent most of their days in ceremonial and stately love-making. For that their swooping, wave-like flight was nobly adapted. One afternoon, deep in the burning core of summer, the hen-bird was perched on the bough of a stark pine high up on the slope of a hill. Down in the valley, overflowing with the nightingale's throbs of sound, her mate began intoning his recitative, evoking wide visions of remote lands, of the buried past, of a radiant future when other lovers would meet. But her thoughts were for the present only. She cocked

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her head to one side, showing bill and crest in a continuous line, and then, in a resplendent rushing dive, as though she flew indeed upon the wings of love, plunged down to him. This was a southern memory to cherish in the northern years to come.

C - THE OLIVE GROVE

My olive grove was tucked into a crook of the shaggy foothills of the Montagnes des Maures, where their lines went tossing and drooping down to the sea with a row of detached pines like a bristling mane along their crests. How gratefully the eye travelled down that long incline and launched its vision into waters on which the sun played such tones – now of so delicate a blue, so tender and evanescent that the sky had dropped over it a bridal veil; now a fathomless madonna blue etched out inshore in broad bands, and, between them and the three couchant islands, a meadow of gold and silver stars casting out a myriad myriad rays! Eastward across the flat plain with its reddish-brown soil plotted out in minute striated vineyards, the second arm of the mountains travelled down to the sea almost exactly parallel with the first. The little town was gathered high up into the fold of these two ridges, its warm-tiled roofs topping the green, blue and red shutters all clustered under the shadow of the castle above them. Though only six hundred feet above the plain it seemed so precariously poised as to be two thousand, while the density of these vari-coloured shutters gave an impression of bright watchfulness.

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Up above both town and castle, set like an ornament on the highest point of the hills and fronting the desolation of the mountains, was l'Ermitage, once a place of pilgrimage, now a shell of crumbling stone walls surfed in dark maquis. It was from this holy place, so much more so in the forlornness of its memories than it could ever have been in its tawdry life, that one saw the general configuration of that vast and burning landscape. Form all wilderness must have, and beautifully was that need satisfied. The indented islands stretched out thin along the water were strangely possessed by a dream-like loveliness which struck a perfect balance with their feral aloofness. The crescent plain, cultivated every inch, was enclosed by these two long slopes of the maquis-covered hills, and led the gazer by this deepening prelude to the grandeur of the mountains beyond. The balance between wildness and softness, untrodden nature and nature gardened by man, was again perfect. Never have I seen town, country and wild mountains, sea, islands and plain, romance and classicism, the yoked and the incult, mingled in such assenting harmonies.

The olive grove was a design within this boldly planned architecture opening on the south to its airy halls. Intimacy was its whole secret, a succession of close revelations, encompassed by wilderness, by boundless sea with the land's arms stretched out to it, by blank infinitude of sky-depth. One looked up from a minute umbellifer, with foliage like pointillé lace, to sevenfold ridges plunging through the clouds; to a spit of land westward beyond the crescent plain transfixing, like a swordfish some saurian trapped within the shallows,

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what otherwise looked like a fourth island; towards Africa, Spain, Italy. One's eye-beams shot angelically across these immensities, little Children of the Sun my two eyes were, but returned with more content, more pleased emulation to watch the butterflies at their caprices – one, our holly blue but turned to orange, a madcap mote, many buff-coloured heaths, green-veined whites and a splendid brimstone with a Queen of Sheba air of fanning dusk-soft wings. With lightning glance I could land on that island which, like a dismayed phantom derelict, was now floating through the haze between sea and sky made one. But I could not count the oars of the armoured julusworm rowing over the rocks where I lay, dwarfed survivor of the Saurian Age and more momentous than all the monsters. Jumping spiders (that sounds like a generous oath of surprise) bounded along the boulders, and a tiny scorpion arched tail over back like a trick acrobat. Wonders of littleness, now I understand how the atom bears universes on its hurrying back!

In my grove, my pavilion of many colours, I loved to see the little olives and cork trees playing oaks with their gnarled and angled branches, their hermit-like air, and yet in their symmetry of outline, rounded tops and slender leaf-fingers, how elegant they were! The poplar-like eucalyptuses, scattered singly about the grove, looked fabular Trees of Life beside them, tapering up to scratch the vault of heaven. You could not guess the wiseacre appearance of the olives if you looked down on them from above when wavelets of silver, sea-green and grey fretted their surfaces. Beneath

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their umbrage grew bushes of wood-spurge of a green so flamboyant as to subdue even the flare of the brooms and so tall, so confidently bosky as to hold their own against those majestic flashes of landscape that everywhere riddled the grove's green shade. 'I am the wood-spurge,' they said. The enormous yellow-green cones of the pines that swayed above where the outcrops of schist and granite ended told the same story – namely, that a fairy on tiptoe is somehow as big as a giant.

Other herbs and flowers told their enchantments after a different manner. A break in the rocks, a chance growth of long grasses, the wind parting them, and there swam into my ken a galaxy of Stars-of-Bethlehem, flowers that have combined petal and sepal in the green line down the undersides of the rays, to show, I suppose, that they did really belong to earth. In tiny bowers, the freezias had it nearly all their own way, shaking their bells to drift out their matchless almond scent. Plainly they belonged to a Keats landscape and to declare their allegiance they fell into one after another of beautiful variations, like changes of metre, some being almost pure white, others yellow, others lacking the lavender streaks on the reverse of the petals. No, not Keats over there but Botticelli, for taking a sidelong look down the hill-slope I discovered a small grass plot, brimmed over with freezias, cream, yellow, mauve in all shades, but none of them in their wildest metamorphoses losing that yellow stain at the bottom of the cup that in our island reappears as the yellow spot in the heart of the eyebright.

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At the bottom of a ditch where overarching dead brushwood made a grot of darkness, incredibly grew a single Madonna lily, in grave flawless white excellence, a parable so dramatic that you might almost have credited the seed with a more than Lamarckian intention to become a goddess (Cretan Rhea in her cave) in that very twilit cell and nowhere else. Her wild court without the shrine were lupins, miniatures of the cultivated sort, the flowers of a deep blue veined in darker purple; the rosy arcs of the cistus whose crumpled petals proclaimed their natal freshness; scarlet poppies; tall lavender of that dark violet which seemed the very colour of intense meditation; golden broom, each bush a little Easter; vetches and peas running about like pages in motley; grape-hyacinth; starry tuberose stiff as chamberlains.

No flower better expressed the vagrant shy intimacy of the grove than the white blooms of the maquis-scrub, with lemon-yellow centres to add a touch of spiritual grace to their open comeliness. It was unexpected to find that homely coarse plant wearing so frail a beauty, Valjean and his Cosette. Stranger, almost miserly was its election where to unwrap its treasures. It covered all the foothills in one dense unbroken surge, though not a single flower was to be seen. But in the grove was its nature softened, or did it yield to some influence of the place that commanded, 'All are fair ones here'? Stubbornly, for while one bush would only spend a coin or two of its secret powers, another was clothed in virtue, prodigal of all it had. The flowers opened all-Danæ, were luminous for one hour, showered their petals and others shone in their stead, so that this plain

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plant became a furnace of beauty inexhaustible. Oddly, too, I would stumble upon a sudden lyric of England – a plot of grass, moistened perhaps by some underground spring, and gemmed with familiar flowers, geranium, veronica, forget-me-not, daisy and bladder-campion. It would only be a few square feet of ground, but the quality of English country was all contained therein, its hastening green thought. But I would look up and see the ruined castle posed by its immobile ritual cypresses and rounded pines, dominating the huddled little town, and I was within the frame of a primitive Italian picture. And there was no Englishing my grove's profuse rock-gardens bordering the twisty granite path that climbed out into the dark barbaric hills, rashed with tumbled rock-masses. The spell of these rock-gardens was breathed from a more intimate country of the sun, where earth is at once more prodigal and more barren.

I passed many times along that path, beside which every crevice, niche, coign and platform among the boulders was spouting flowers, out into the maquis and juniper forest where they had all vanished, where the vegetation became uniform and precipitous ravines and massive folds and slopes blotted out particularity. But each time I walked, accompanied by the ghostly peals of the goat-bells and looking now at the flowers, now down the hillside where the crooked bowls and branches of the little trees receded more and more impalpably into the shadows, the impression of reality became more and more tenebrous with them. The place was fey, a landscape of legend, and I became less and less sure of

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my own identity. I was a figure of tapestry wandering from the hills of La Belle Dame into the groves of the Faerie Queen. I was the Prince seeking his Sleeping Beauty.

And oh, I found her!

V

EASTERMAIN

THE little wood certainly possessed an apartness all its own, one distinct from its isolation, its unexpectedness, even its incongruity in the middle of the watery wilderness that surrounded it. It was a round oak-wood dumped in a wide acreage of marshland and grass-bristly meadow, so different from the obedient nature of the Petrol and Bungalow Age that it was like death or love or revolution or anything elemental bursting through our civilized crust. Fey and fierce and fantastic creatures haunted these swamps – the bearded reedling or manica that has a black moustache, a peal of unearthly thin bells and the humming-birds for its cousins; the bittern and the water-rail, bizarre creations of a kind of sixth sense of reedland; the posed godwit, a Chinese screen-painting taken life; little terns, hardly birds so much as visions of them, white celestial thoughts of birds; harriers with strong winnowing flight and golden heraldic faces; courtly grebes; fluting redshank; swallow-tail butterfly. And reeds, a world of reeds, with a labyrinth of water-tunnels boring through them, a wild waste of reeds hissing in an orchestral variety of key as the north-easter shook their manes now in swoops and now in a mighty onrush. Sky, reeds, water – they gave one an idea of cosmos fluttering into

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solidity and form not out of molten heats but vapours, insubstantials, desires thin and drifting as in the consciousness of a ghost. A forest of the coal measures would have seemed quite up to date beside the antiquity of this vague fenland.

Instead, there was the wood, the leaves of its blast-stricken trees stamped with that virile, effulgent, burnished green which is the pride of the oak in spring. It is a green different in values from that of the beech which waves a myriad shaded lamps, or from the spring-colour of the lime leaves which run to purity of texture. The oaks welcome spring in naked green flames. The wood astonished the sight in this indeterminate world of waters. But reedland was not kept its distance; it crowded full into the temple. The reeds made nothing of the dyke that surrounded the wood or its dry flooring, but shot up within its recesses to ten feet high and more, and you went crashing through them like a pachyderm. Here and there in the clearings frothed the climbing corydal, a plant whose flower and foliage are so finely cut that it mocked the stiffness of the reeds. An occasional bramble, like an old man gathering sticks, alone broke the uniformity of the undergrowth.

We crossed a stream clotted with dead reeds and there was a wren's nest poked into them, a tiny palace of felted moss built out in the wilds. There seemed an uncouth tender service in the massing of useless multitudes of useless broken stems to support a home that might have floated down on the wind. Further on, we passed a jay's nest in the crotch of a tree, a sprawl of sticks as naively exposed to the eye as though the bird

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were nesting in the Garden of Eden. What were we doing in this wood? I looked up into the tree-tops to find out, and on the tallest of them was cradled a raft with a single young heron for sailor, fixing the horizon with a stare that seemed as immemorial as his ancestry. Young herons and young bitterns appal one with their look of age, and the flappings of the latter transport one to the first flightiness of the pterodactyl. One can do without a time-machine when handling these grotesque archaics. And this young heron standing up on his raft might have been left high and dry by the subsidence of the primeval waters.

All about him stirred the strong new leaves of the oaks, acting that resurrection of life which makes the continuity of ageing time look like a childish convention. If time has any processional reality, it grows younger year by year. But it had none in that wood, for the oak leaves were the deathless flame of life and the heron among them represented the eternal fixity of age. There could be no transition between them, no relationship, no compromise. They were absolutes. The only singer in the wood was the garden warbler, and his soft rush of melody flowed out among the boles — the wood's fountain hidden from the eye, which ceased to fling out its bright drops as soon as one tried to find it.

On we went through the reed paths and a few steps further met a bramble bush. Under its arches brooded a long-eared owl upon the bare ground with its ear-tufts pricked firmly out in the tenebrous light and the fiery yellow eyes set in the solemn disc-face gazing at us without a flicker. The bird sat very upright and as

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though turned to stone so long that roaming mosses and lichens splashed with buff browns and yellows had grown completely over it, leaving only the eyes, balls of whirled sulphur, to glare the utter wildness of the creature. The long-eared owl builds no nest of its own, but mends the abandoned shacks of the wood pigeon, the bulkier habitations of crow and magpie or the squirrel's drey — all tree dwellings. Here it sat upon the bare ground that we trod within six feet of that feathery covering of emotions and reactions and heedings and gropings, what worlds removed from ours! Lovely elemental thing, what warm current of understanding might pass from me to you, could I but shake this civilization out of me like a dog climbed out of the water!

The wonder was repeated not fifty yards distant, for under a dome of dead rushes and in a deserted rabbit-burrow sat a kestrel, the nesting custom of whose tribe resembles that of the long-eared owl. The bird sat without a tremor of its red and brown striated plumage, but the head turned anxiously, and the brown eyes were more fearful than were the cat-like orbs of the owl. It felt then, this airy being whose tremblings hold it still among the winds. But what did it feel? The painted shells beneath its breast? Yes, but surely something more than what endureth only for a season, and there was that in the kestrel's eyes of changing lights more subtle, more durable than the waves of passing instinct. One almost read in them a communion with the hollow reeds, the burnished oak leaves, the wildness of marsh, the strolling flocks of cloud, that drew from them all some quality of their being. What is that

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being? Why cannot we with our civilized minds, our measuring-rods of long-accumulated wisdom of adjustment, discover its nature? We only know that they fail us, and by their failing we are rejected. But give me to mix my being utterly and for ever with yours, and the veil of the temple is rent by a knowledge greater than its own.

VI

GRAINS OF SAND

THERE is something about flat country that stirs the ancestral juice in my bones. I never feel lonely or lost in it as one often does on 'High Places,' even though I seemed now to be the one and only pillar separating the earth from the heavens. I went walking with my head in the sky-world and my feet running gold at every step. I was the only human being on a continent of sand that shored the infinite of space ahead of me, a Himalayas behind me, saltings as flat as the strand on my left hand like the first green thought out of Genesis, and the sea on my right hand which was merely a slightly ruffled inverted sky tremulous to the travail of earth. But I did not feel at all like a tramp who had lost his way from multitudinous familiarities and strayed into the void. On the contrary I felt rather like a cosmic caryatid.

On this vast sweep of sand, you see, the sky was very low and the sun an arc lamp not far beyond the fingertip. The sky was far lower than it appears on a mountain where you are suspended between heaven and home. Mountains small things and you with them, the flats magnify things and you with them. Those sand dunes at the back of me were a mighty range indeed. The sand was sprayed over their broken slopes like snow and

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the defiles between their shaggy crests wound athwart them in proper Cordillera fashion. The ripple marks on the sand, the golden floor of space, were themselves like maps of lofty mountains, the streamlets slithering a tortuous channel over the mud, very Rivers of Life, and the sea itself was eternity upside down. And the variety of colouring dispelled the illusion as to the monotone of space. Space thought in colours, and they were long, long thoughts peopling the vacancy. In the declining sun, the sticky patch of carboniferous forest-mud was a paste of molten gold, quite different from the aerial gold, the faery gold of the enchanted strand. Not that it bothered to maintain the gold standard. Here it was a ruddy chestnut and madder, flushed with the shafts of the sun; here buff, and over there it was even blue beaten out into quivering strips like a slow-motion film of a butterfly's wing. The sands positively ran from gold to lavender and rose madder and in places were opalescent, while one narrow spur of sand that darted right out to sea was lemon yellow. Never was there such a primal paint-box. Yet how ephemeral this colour dance out here in the immutable, for the grey-blue sea comes in from half a mile out, not like the commonplace galloping horse of Mont Saint Michel, but like a falcon on its prey, or the horrid stealthiness and swoop of old age.

But it hadn't yet turned me off my job of holding up the heavens, and meantime I was companioned by other starry beings. The gulls by the sea's edge, herring, common and black-headed, gleamed with an incredible whiteness, the far-away ones being astral solitaires, the

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nearer groups nebulae. The Sandwich terns, shrieking like the elementals they are, and diving with the single-minded fervour of gannets, were plunging meteors. But I don't know what to call the little terns whose laggards were still resisting the urge of migration in the September sunshine. Were these baby stars that yapped like Pomeranians as they went rushing through the ether and finally dipping into the Nihil with the curtesy of a fluttering columbine? I could have no doubt about the greater black-backed gull who pranced along the shore with black wings folded smugly over his great white form, an allegorical image of Pomp, powerful, complacent, absurd. Here where I was as a tree walking and everything else made a mountain out of its mole-hill because we were all plumb in the middle of the illimitable instead of it dwarfing us as a background — that gull was a gull indeed, the Great Gull Authority ludicrously posturing before the wide vision of the tittering angels. The oyster-catchers piping away along the shallows in that fussy chatterpye way of theirs and sparring at the gulls with flashes of red and white and black, they were evidently part of the heavenly host whose merriment at the expense of the ponderous black-backs expressed itself in little curvets and eddies of flight and dance.

A solitary sanderling was so far away that I could hardly make out whether he was himself on earth or his ka in heaven. I knew him from the other small waders by his pallor, and perhaps he was so lost in ecstasy that I saw him in both planes at once. The exquisite grey plover, white instead of black beneath

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in their winter plumage, and in marvellously delicate pale beamy grey above, with richly but finely patterned pencillings all over – they looked what cherubs ought to look instead of the fantastic winged heads of infants (Herod's victims?) as they are usually represented. There was a godwit too among the larger waders perched up on his scaffolding of legs, and though I knew both species I could not be sure of him either as the bar-tailed, for which he was too slender, or the black-tailed, for which he was not pied enough. There was all the consummate guile of candour in the perfect luminosity and transparency of a waste in which insubstantial things loomed vastly and solids were translated into a volatile being.

A few of the waders I could not identify, but though as an ornithologist I am lost without a label, as a quasi-god I could not expect to be cognisant with all the pantheons. But I knew then who they were when they gave a voice to vastitude. The curlew and redshank cried like the sons of God because the devil had become so respectable on earth – so melancholy was the chant. The Sandwich terns shrieked like Prometheus when his liver was being torn, *Larus Ridibundus* laughed like Mercury before Ares and Aphrodite in their net, Homeric, inextinguishable laughter, and the godwit uttered a double, dull, tinny note like a disgruntled Norn.

The beach shone as a flattened horizontal rainbow and the sea was unplumbed blue space lapping it round. Or was it the magic carpet between earth and heaven and I walking with airy steps on its parti-coloured

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fabric with my head in the white radiance of eternity? How can I tell? Surely it was heaven or a momentary shadow of it, for I know none better if place it be than walking over hard sand on a hot day with the forms and cries of birds continually impinging on one's senses and space bewitched by light. If there be the beloved companion, then I should like to know what more one wants, for the kind of heaven one reads about sounds more like an antique shop than a Garden of Eden. At any rate, I have seen no more perfect visual illusion of world without end than the sands of Brancaster. God forbid that the eye of the building speculator ever look acquisitively upon them.

VII

WOODLAND BIRDS

IN England there are few deep woods and the habits of our birds have been so modified by human cultivation that they have learned to shun the innermost recesses of woodland, which are as empty of life and movement as a cathedral on a week-day. The sights and sounds that greet the wanderer are mostly fugitive, the ghostly swerve of a tawny owl disturbed from his cloistered doze in an ivy-dressed oak, the pebbly-bright percussions of black-capped tits, cole or marsh, rummaging in the leafy upper world, the rasping scream of a jay too furtive to allow us a glimpse of a form chestnut-bright as a sun-patch among the shadows, the imperative love-tattoo of the greater spotted woodpecker in the spring, well shrouded in his lofty greenery from revealing his chequered coat.

But these strokes of a dimly apprehended life are invasions of a sepulchral quietude that has no continuity nor power to make us feel that birds and deep woods are intimate. And this is true of all seasons of the year. Exceptions there are, but they are not of a kind to ruffle the impression of remoteness for birds alike with men. The brown tree-creeper with his reaping-hook, who searches the interstices of the bole and jerks up it in wide spirals before he flits in silence to the foot of the

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next tree, is a true bird of the wood's heart, even though we may often watch his intent labourings among the trunks of open park or glade. The little worker is tied to the tree as closely as were the less arduous Dryads in their day, and his rare song is shy and faint, twilit as the shades that are his home.

Of no such secretive disposition is the hearty nuthatch, and some of his plangent calls only a trained naturalist can distinguish from the wryneck's, an early migrant whose triple shout in the ear of the still drowsing spring has earned him the name of the cuckoo's mate or *boder*. The nuthatch is commoner than the snake-bird who can twist his neck level with his back against the bough and hiss at you. Both are true woodland birds that affect the borders for an excursion rather than by habit. The tree-creeper is a fairy plodder, a Nibelung of the upper twilight, but the nuthatch is quick and restless as a lover's heart and, like it, rarely comes to ground. It needs the virtue of an artist's model in repose to catch the warm grey-blue and buff of back and front. But you will not fail to recognize him by a blunt body tapering at both ends, while his gymnastics up and down the oak-timber are miracles of sleight-of-foot. And if there are a pair of nuthatches in the monkish core of the wood you have reached, the solemnity is burst and rip goes the silence, as they twang the three stock notes of their mandolins, with all their gaiety and might.

It is not usual to label bullfinches as woody, but except in the spring when they go budding in the orchards, and in the autumn when they gently flute

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their way in sweeping arcs along the hedgerows, they live in densely thicketed retirement, stockishly ambling along a few yards of twiggery what time the nuthatch has done his mile. Their movements are always leisurely, and when you catch sight of them in the bosky gloom, they have an almost old-maidish air of pottering content. The call is the softest, mellowest woodwind in all bird-music, perhaps of any sound utterable by creature kind, and when you obtain a clear view of the russet-red breast below the blue-grey back and blue-black head, the flush is the very heart and meaning of English country, caught up like a tune in leaf and berry, wood-top and sky-stain of the afterglow.

But a little rushing night, a prowling death-cloud has swept athwart the scrub, and the bullfinch scrabbles into the farthest matted density as the sparrow-hawk, a still not uncommon resident of the deeper woods, plunges by in a swirl of rounded wing. Compared with the flight of other hawks, which requires more air room, the sparrow-hawk's short turns, swoops, dashes, prying and corners are as dagger-play to javelin-throw or sword-sweep. Nothing could be more unlike the way of a peregrine falcon as it flashes down in blue lightning on to the back of a wood-pigeon than the feline hunting of the sparrow-hawk, raking a thicket or stalking in low flight so dexterously among the tree-boles. Wood-pigeons, distinguished from stock-doves by the transverse white bar on the wing, roost far within the woodland, anchor their frail raft cradles to the tree-tops and murmur summer's plentitude from the depths. Nevertheless, they are always off cruising the open fields of

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air in headlong flight or guzzling among the turnip tops.

A bird more characteristic of the wood's interior is the lesser spotted or barred woodpecker, as it is more correctly named. This prettiest piedling with a crimson topknot is no larger than a chaffinch. He is as stay-at-home up among the million leaves of his attic as the creeper going his rounds among the trunks, and so is more rarely seen than any other woodland native. There he lives in his roof-tree, dipping from lime to lime like their branches in the wind, fluttering among the elmdomes like their leaves, and voicing anon a high fretful pipe as though his small life had never known anything but the drip of rain among them.

But the most enchanting of all the woodland birds to hear is the wood-warbler, a summer migrant who also lives among the tree-tops, thus parting company with the other two of the three-leaf warblers, chiff-chaff and willow-warbler. His long wings bear his slender form to us in April, clad like her and the beech-leaves he frequents in green and gold. It is best to watch him singing and accompanying the notes with a quivering, a trilling one might say, of the wings, before the rising tide of green conceals the sprite from our eyes, and he swings and drifts tirelessly among it with no eyes to see him but his mate's. The song opens with a few measured notes which rush into a bubbling cadence until they are blended together. Silence and then follows a high detached melodious peal, repeated at intervals and comparable only with the vibrant and passionate single note of the nightingale that rises to so



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wonderful a crescendo. But the emotional effect of these separate notes uttered by two such different birds is entirely distinct. The nightingale's is the very fervour of life and love achieved at the peak, the wood-warbler's has the intonation of memory and brightness overcast. Of woodland adventure there is none more fey than the sight and sound of the wood-warbler, singing as he moves and moving as he sings and warning us as his elfin horn is blown how leaves decay and fall and all things pass.

All these birds and sundry others with them may be seen and heard where woodland is deepest, and yet you will be surprised how rarely you do see and hear them. But on the borders, in dell and glade, mottled with sun and shadow, and among more open aisles, their companies are reinforced by divers other species. Perhaps the truest bird of the borderland between wood and meadow or park is the yaffle or green woodpecker in bright green and yellow with a black face and crimson crown, the largest of his kin. Nothing delicate and retiring about him, for he sails up and down the ways of the air, as he opens and shuts his wings and leaves a wake of boisterous laughter. It is hardly credible that a voice so jocund and in key with the triumph of spring should ring out from a species whose relative is a tiny woodpecker with a note like an ailing child's. No bird has a richer confidence in himself, and it is amazing to see a body of male yaffles challenging one another in trumpet-tongued rivalries during the spring courtships. Among grave oaks where they go bounding from tree to tree, their brilliant green forms and Homeric laughter

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seem to bring us into the company of Olympian bird-gods.

All this forwardness is packed with meaning. The yaffle is stepping out of himself in evolution. We catch him now in the very act of forming a new species. Observe the structure and anatomy of the yaffle, and you will see that he is highly specialized for an exclusive tree-life. Feet, pickaxe of a bill, massive head, stiff tail-feathers to support the weight of the body, are all adapted for climbing, feeding, nesting and living among the trees. Yet this tree-bird is transforming himself into a ground-bird through his extreme partiality for ants and their larvæ. If his structure is modified in the future to suit this altered mode of life, we shall have a very striking example of the Lamarckian principle of use and disuse, and the inheritance of acquired characters in the formation of new species. Where Lamarck and Samuel Butler after him differed from Darwin was in their view that an organism was able to translate itself into a new form by willing the way from within. In other words, change of habit set in motion by the creature's own response to a fluctuating environment was followed by a change of structure. Thus the dipper, though purely a land bird by bodily organization and family inheritance, has achieved the power of walking and feeding under the water by his own will to do so.

Redstarts and tree-pipits, both summer migrants, are companions of the yaffle in the more smiling borderland of old woods, and in parks where oaks, the world's grey fathers, stand in groups. The pipits are birds somewhere between larks and wagtails, and in plumage as in

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shrillness of note the tree-pipit comes nearer the former. Like the wood-warbler, the tree-pipit combines song with deliberate movement, chooses a tall tree for his stage, and opens with a musing prelude that hastens into a trill. But here the resemblance ends, for the song lengthens out once more into the clear inflected note with which it began, and when the first notes come lisping forth, the bird mounts into the air and hangs suspended, while the tremble of the wings beats time to the trill. Then, as the melody is drawn out to its plaintive close, he flies slowly back to his bough, sinking as it were in the dying fall of his own music, so that song and flight are made one harmonious whole. In thus exquisitely mingling song and air dance, individual birds differ greatly in degree of performance, and I have noticed that it is the best singers who are the more skilled in matching song with flight. Yet there is little doubt that the tree-pipit, like the yaffle, is changing his habit, for the birds that sing without leaving their tree are becoming more and more numerous, and as the woodpecker is progressing in liberty, so the tree-pipit is degenerating in artistry.

The beautiful redstart, rufous but for his blue-grey back, black throat and creamy forehead, builds in old oaks and ripples and floats between ground and nesting tree like a tiny brand, while his tail, moving up and down or from side to side, is a candle flame in a draught. The brief song begins with promise and ends in disillusionment.

Over the tops of the brambles and elders that margin the wood, flocks of long-tailed tits, the minute parroquet

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of our clime, in rose and dusk-colour, go dipping in autumn like the plumelets of dandelion or traveller's joy in the wind, so inconsequent are their movements. Goldcrests, nuthatches, creepers and other tits sometimes accompany them. But in May these same thickets that margin the woods throw out waves of song and the very voice of the nightingale is lost in the sweet clamour. The listener will be surprised that the triumphant nuptial fire of his song fails to dominate the choir. That is because it burns more often through the night. He too, with his nest of oak leaves, is a dweller among tall oaks, branch-charmèd by the earnest stars, that in their stillness listen to the impassioned rhapsody filling the night below them.

HUMAN NATURE IN CIVILIZATION

VIII

THE NEW ANTHROPOLOGY

I. THE DIFFUSION OF CULTURES

THERE can be no explaining what the new anthropology is until we know exactly what we mean by the old. Though both principles have much to contribute to each other, the conflict between them is at present so bitter that it helps us to make the proper distinctions and categories. The new anthropology is a working hypothesis which interprets the origins, growth, vicissitudes and general movements of civilization by cultural contacts between peoples, usually through the impingement of a higher culture upon a lower. This process we sum up under the term of diffusion. One of the best advocates of diffusion is as a commonplace of civilized existence to-day. A Manchester is implicit in the Australian bush; Paris sets the Moorish fashions; arrow-heads wrought from glass bottles are a material equipment of some of the most primitive peoples on the earth. The tea and coffee we drink, the tobacco we smoke, the clothes we wear, are all evidence of the widest cultural intercommunications. Our very speech – Indo-European – is expressive of that same principle. We see American culture as pervasive in North Africa and Honolulu as in London and New York.

These diffusions may be catalogued into various

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types and do not throw any revealing light upon origins. They merely illustrate certain adult processes in being without covering their birth and infancy. But the new anthropology of diffusion professes to offer a satisfactory explanation for the development of culture from primitive to civilized conditions of life. When we examine such cultural phenomena as the growth and dispersion of religious ideas, we find that the axiom of diffusion applies just as solidly to them as to the distribution of material crafts and objects of utility. Thus every one of the great religions of the world, Christianity, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, were derived not only from a single original centre, but from the magnetic and dominant personality of one man.

It is again a truism that the general tides of culture bearing upon their waters religious, scientific, literary, institutional ideas, and the more material merchandise with them, have flowed over specific areas of the earth's surface. The historian who combated the fact that modern American civilization sprang from the Old World would hardly get his thesis published even at his own expense. The historian who advances the view that the earliest American civilization was originally a grafting from Asia is meeting to-day much the same kind of ostracism. Yet no serious student of the movements of culture would deny that culture contacts once existed between Egypt and Sumer and the highly civilized cities of Harappa and Mohenjo Daro in Sindh,¹

¹ *N.B.*: — "Vast cities with regular streets, houses and temples . . . and amenities such as drains and baths" (Gordon Childe: *The Most Ancient East*). The date is soon after 3000 B.C.

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between India and pre-historic Burma, between South-Eastern Asia and pre-historic India, and between the islands of Indonesia and those of Polynesia. Thus the vast region of sea and land between Western Asia and the island constellations of the Pacific represented more or less of a single cultural whole at the dawn of history. But widen the boundaries a little to the west as far as Egypt, and a little to the east as far as Central America, and angel-axiom turns into devil-heresy.

Nor, again, would any archæologist bristle if it was put to him that megalithic Britain, the Britain, that is to say, of Avebury, of Stonehenge, of the long and early round barrows, dolmens and other works in stone and earth, was influenced by developments in Western Europe, whose settlements, as is becoming daily more apparent, had definite cultural links with the Eastern Mediterranean. And if we sweep like a falcon to the Americas, he would be justly regarded as a 'faddist' who disputed the spread of the Maya culture northward into Yucatan, Mexico and ultimately the United States. All that the diffusionist claims to do is to throw bridges across these gaps and to view the process of civilization as an entity and a continuity which owed their ultimate being to the development of a single culture in one locality. As a consequence of certain conditions, he maintains that this culture, with many modifications and by very gradual steps, overspread the greater part of the world, particularly in those areas in which desirable sources of wealth were to be found. He is alive not merely to the importance of the cultural modifications, the paraphrases to

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the original text, which took place in transit, but to the steep variations of date which followed that distribution. The pre-Columbian civilization of America, for instance, was in flower well within the Christian era, while in Asia Minor it was in being three thousand years before Christ.

These are the main tenets of the diffusionist argument. Since they appear so very harmless and are founded as much upon daily experience as historical verities, what on earth, asks the surprised inquirer, is the objection to them?

2. THEIR SINGLE SOURCE

Let me state it. The diffusionists, as I have said, narrow down the first experiment in civilization to one region, and this brings them into sharpest conflict with the view of current anthropology that a number of civilizations sprang up like isolated geysers through man's inherent predisposition to progress. This single region is Egypt, and by some queer illogic the new school would probably have received a somewhat less boreal reception if it had pointed to Babylonia as the primal source of organized society. But Egypt itself is taboo and there exists no rational ground for such prejudice. The Egyptian argument needs a book to be adequately set out and I can do no more here than outline the anatomy of it.

The inherent conservatism of mankind is as much a fact of common experience as the diffusion of culture in our midst. That there still exist in odd corners of the

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world small communities of primitives whose culture has not perceptibly advanced beyond that of the Old Stone Age is a very damaging criticism of the assumption that mankind is inherently progressive. And in the very heart of civilization we know only too well how painfully a new idea must struggle to slip under the guard of a petrified institution; we know how bleak and lonely are the lives of reformers and inventors, nor can we exaggerate the blind capacity of men for living on the past however unenlightened, inconvenient or positively injurious. The history of nations is not one of battles but of dogmas, and a dogma is an idea or condition of mind impervious to reason, evidence or experience.

Such fundamentals being admitted, it is hardly likely that the momentous discovery of agriculture which, together with the use of metals, marks the true distinction between the primitive and civilized man, would have been made independently in different parts of the world. As for metals, the oldest manufactured metal objects in the world were the pre-dynastic (Badarian) Egyptian beads and pin. Agriculture would probably only have been invented in a region where Nature herself could have instructed the slow hand and brain of man to advance just a little further than her own lessons. It could have been made only in a country where the first agricultural experiments were unlikely to end in failure. The only river in the world whose flood was highly favourable to the irrigation of the soil was the Nile. In this respect it differed fundamentally from the Tigris and the Euphrates, whose floods are

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both turbulent and unseasonable. I am leaving out of account the crop of material which links the early Pharaohs with irrigation works, the early gods of Egypt with agriculture, and the early religious institutionalism of that wonderful country with its ceremonies. It is a significant tribute to the sheer weight of the Egyptian evidence that Professor Gordon Childe in his latest book, *The Most Ancient East* (1928), remarks: 'The oldest food-producing people of whom we possess any approximately datable remains are the Badarians (pre-dynastic Egyptians). This fact undoubtedly enormously strengthens the claims of Egypt as advanced already by Elliot Smith and his school.'

Secondly, in no other country of the ancient world but Egypt is it possible to trace a transitional continuity between primitive and civilized conditions of life. In India, in Babylonia, in Central America the beginnings of civilization were not gradual but abrupt, adult without a childhood. In the third place, the chronology of Egyptian civilization gives it priority in time. Modern archæological research, for instance, is more and more definite in permitting no earlier date than about 3500 B.C. for the first civilizations of Asia Minor, and no other civilized country of the ancient East can trace its genesis back to within five centuries of Egyptian pre-dynastic culture. The first ruler who united Upper and Lower Egypt was Menes, and his date was roughly 3400 B.C., while agriculture, kingship and an organized religion, all identification marks of a civilized society, were, so far as the evidence goes, in existence for at least one thousand years before this. Professor Childe puts

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pre-dynastic Egyptian civilization as far back as 5000 B.C. Authorities are agreed that the solar calendar came into first use in 4241 B.C., and a lunar calendar almost certainly preceded it. Both were inseparable from agriculture, religion and the kingship. And when we reach backwards into the full palæolithic era of Egyptian pre-history, we find a marked superiority in flint workmanship over that of all other peoples in Africa, Asia and Europe. This much then must be conceded to the Cambridge School of Anthropology, which declares climate and geography to be the dominating influences in moulding the social advance of mankind. The unique geographical conditions of Egypt made her the home of the first civilized community and the foster-mother of all other civilizations.

3. CULTURE V. RACE AND GEOGRAPHY

Here we are in the wind of the second clash between the traditional anthropologists and the pioneers of the new movement. The idea that man is the pawn of his geographical environment, urged into progress by the nature of the soil and the fluctuations of climate, has had a remarkable tenacity in the history of anthropological thought. It first appears in the universal history of Jean Bodin (1566), was taken up in the eighteenth century by Montesquieu's *Esprit des Lois*, where an arbitrary analogy between physical and social phenomena is maintained, was strenuously resisted by Turgot, and survived after the downfall of the French Revolution and the mechanical triumph of the industrial one

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in England, to be embodied in the work of Huntingdon and the Cambridge School.

The historical school of diffusion, however, rejects such mechanistic interpretations of human advancement by its insistence on the changes wrought by the leaven of cultural impact. Climate has had little or nothing to do with the growth of civilization, as the imposing ruins in the malarious jungles of India, Cambodia, Honduras and Guatemala amply testify. Soil and climate have determined human settlements but not their progress, and only the former in the sense that the explorers and prospectors of the Eastern Mediterranean selected for occupation those geological surfaces whereon or wherein were accessible the substances they valued. Gold for its 'life-giving' properties and the perpetuation of life, tin for bronze, lead for silver, pearls and pearl-shell for their equally fictitious preciousness in the preservation of life here and hereafter, gums and resins for the elaborate craft of preserving the dead (the Torres Straits Islanders, for instance, mimicked the specialized processes of mummification prevalent only in the Twenty-first Dynasty of Egypt) — these were the Pied Pipers that whistled the ancient mariners to brave snow and equatorial heats, to penetrate the defences of forests and mountains, and to break the silence of unknown seas.

Thus, according to the diffusionist script, civilization was not a process of evolution fired by struggle and the hazards of geographical circumstance into which the human will entered not at all. It was planted by men who had definite aims and purposes and settled in definite places to gratify them. And the tenuity of the

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geographical case is well illustrated by the stagnation of primitive peoples who, whether dwelling in Arctic wastes, in pockets of North and South America, on Siberian tundras, in Congo or Bornean jungle, yet remain unprogressive. Thus external contact or suggestion or imposition must have been responsible for the changes in the conduct and culture of primitives, since, where such influence is absent or negligible, they do not progress beyond the culture of the Old Stone Age.

A third point of division between the new and the old anthropology is the factor of degeneration. Here again the diffusionist takes his stand upon verifiable phenomena, with which archaic history is packed. I have dealt at length with the story and meaning of decadence, and the reason why the older anthropology neglects them elsewhere in the book.

An apple of discord between the two schools is, furthermore, the clash between the racial appeal and the ebb and flow of cultural distribution. Before the advent of the diffusionists, anthropology was dangerously obsessed with the fallacies of racial superiority. Unless we take extreme examples, such as the low cephalic index of the Australian Bushman or (possibly) the mental inadequacy of the negro in comparison with other racial types, there is no real evidence of any one race being innately 'superior' to its fellow earth-dwellers, or naturally richer in artistic and intellectual endowment than they. The telling factor is their cultural equipment and heritage and they can only be justly estimated by means of the historical method, by,

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in other words, analysing the processes and mechanisms of cultural diffusion. Why, for instance, were the Celts and Saxons of Western Europe of a warlike disposition, and the 'Neolithic' or Mediterranean peoples who preceded them there of a comparatively peaceful one? The only sound way of approach is by examining the cultural links between these several peoples at the periods of time when each was dominant and trying to see what were the social and political or religious institutions which introduced certain changes in their conduct and ideas. To say that the Celtic 'race' was naturally one of herdsmen and warriors and the Mediterranean one of peaceful miners and agriculturists is simply begging the question. 'I cordially subscribe,' wrote John Stuart Mill, 'to the remark of one of the greatest thinkers of our time, who says of the supposed differences of race, "Of all the vulgar modes of escaping from the consideration of the effect of social and moral influences on the human mind, the most vulgar is that of attributing the diversities of conduct and character to inherent natural differences."'

4. SAVAGE AND PRIMITIVE

But perhaps the most fundamental division of all is concerned with social and human valuations. A student of history coming fresh to the books of the established ethnologists cannot fail to be struck with the large assumptions made in them as to the inborn and inherent pre-dispositions of what is called the 'savage' condition of mankind. He will read that the 'savage' when con-

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fronted with certain circumstances 'would' do this, that and the other. The answer of the diffusionists is to inquire what he actually *did* do, by a comparative study of the beliefs, customs, folk-lore, monuments, implements of early man, not merely in their remarkable similarities, but divergencies. The results of our knowledge of what savages did do are strikingly different from what they are supposed to have done.

The next landmark of this same student will be his perception that no distinction is made between the savage and the primitive, and it is upon drawing a very sharp distinction between them that the diffusionist bases his case. The primitive he defines as uncivilized man – man, that is to say, who has had no contact with the customs, crafts and beliefs of organized society. The scientific definition of the civilized state is, or ought to be, its knowledge of writing, metals and agriculture, the grading of society into classes, the construction of buildings, the recognition of private property, the organization of supernatural beliefs, and the practice of war. The pure primitive community, therefore, is one which lacks all these elements, and the historical warrant for it lies, in the first place, in the Old Stone Age period of human culture and, in the second, those gatherings of peoples who have survived into modern times without acquiring the institutions of civilized society. 'Savages,' on the other hand, are nearly all at the Iron Age level of culture – the same stage as characterizes the later developments of early civilization. The savage tribe not merely tills the soil and values metals, but everywhere betrays the shreds and patches,

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the vestigial remains of an archaic culture and mythology derived from an early civilization possessing certain specific beliefs and customs. The 'savage,' in other words, represents early civilization in its decay, while the primitive remains on the other side of civilization altogether, the raw material of humanity before it has been moulded by contact with it. Thus the vital distinction between the old and the new anthropology runs parallel with that between the savage and the primitive. The one school recognizes no distinction between them, the other a fundamental one, for the savage, with his gloomy rites, his intricate and choking ceremonial, his cruel and absurd superstitions and the despotism of fear which rules him, is cut off by a long process of civilized permeation from the primitive, whose innocence and ignorance know none of these things. The Bantu tribes of Africa are a good example of the former, the Punan of Borneo of the latter.

When, therefore, orthodox anthropology postulates certain instinctive qualities in the savage and describes them as embryos of civilized psychology, it is making a radical confusion between what is universally inherent in mankind and what has been super-imposed upon it by the contact of a higher upon a lower culture. The injury wrought upon human society by that false premiss cannot be exaggerated. Current ethnology declares that civilization was the product of (1) an instinct for pugnacity out of which grew the legend of the brutal cave-man, and of a naturally predatory human nature; and (2) of certain 'animistic' beliefs such as the worship of spirits, and of the powers of nature which were crystallized into

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religious systems. The diffusionist replies that these 'animistic' tendencies reveal an ancient contact with a civilization called 'megalthic,' whose highly specialized institutions make it easy to identify. Inherent 'animism,' that is to say, is no more and no less than the corpus, partly eaten away by time and degeneration, of certain definable beliefs introduced from without and so not innate but acquired. Man no more 'naturally' worships the sun, stars, serpents and spirits of nature as his ancestors than the average countryman is a naturalist and geologist, and genuinely primitive man shows no trace of the forced and twisted magical concepts of the savage.

5. THE APPEAL TO THE HUMAN BEING

There is no need to labour the world-wide harm done to the happiness and prosperity of mankind by the anthropological theory that human nature is instinctively bestial and pugnacious and only to be purged and disciplined by the laws, refinements and order of civilization. Here again the ethnologist is arguing from the savage to the primitive. But the field-records of primitive communities return a unanimous verdict for the good nature, the peacefulness, the equality and lack of the acquisitive sense common to primitive communities. Since the evidence in this respect is so convincingly uniform, the feuds, the wars, the social divisions and predatory forces which have corroded the annals of all nations in all ages must have been artificially imposed upon human society and are not inherent in mankind. The diffusionists have already

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worked out the transitionary processes by which this revolution in habit and conduct was effected in primitive society as a result of the influences of higher upon lower cultures.

The contrast here between the new and the old anthropology reflects as deep-seated a cleavage as it well could do. The old glorifies the institutions and external fabric of civilized life as slowly eradicating the instinctive viciousness of human nature. The new rehabilitates the dignity of human nature itself and points to human values as the final criterion. It charges the ills of humanity not to man himself, his instincts and natural disposition, but to his social background and institutional environment. And it accomplishes that by disentangling the original nature of man from the systems, tradition and machinery of civilization which have modified it. A quotation from Field-Marshal Sir William Robertson in 1927 casts a blazing light upon what this change of perspective means. 'People declare,' he said, 'that human nature being what it is, war will always be with us, and for it we must always be prepared.' The reply of the diffusionist is that human nature would never have laid its hand on sword, spear or bomb had it not been trained, educated and organized into warlike habits by the toxins introduced with the blessings of a civilized mode of life.

The conflict between the two schools of thought is apparent in European history from the Renaissance onwards. There is no doubt that the inspiration of Sir Thomas More's somewhat arid reflections upon the perfect society was directly due to the discovery of

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America and the revelation of conditions of life among the Indians radically different from those of European civilization. As marked was the same influence upon Montaigne, who was frequently in contact with merchants and seamen at Bordeaux. Mr. E. J. Paine in the *Cambridge Modern History* (Vol. I, p. 59) describes how deeply this most human of French philosophers was affected by the contrasts between Indian and European life: —

‘What if civilization, after all, were a morbid and unnatural growth? What if the condition of man in America were that for which the Creator designed him? What if those omnipotent powers, law and custom, as at present constituted, were impudent usurpers, destined one day to decline under the influence of right reason, and to give place, if not to the original rule of beneficent Nature, at least to something essentially very different from the systems which now passed under their names? Montaigne puts these questions very pointedly. In the Tupi-Guarini of Brazil, as described by one who had known them long and intimately, he recognized nothing of the character associated with the words “barbarous” and “savage.” They were rather a people permanently enjoying the fabled Golden Age of ancient poetry; strangers to the toils, diseases, social inequalities, vices and trickeries which chiefly made up civilized life.’

Montaigne, of course, made no real distinction between the primitive and semi-civilized Indians of

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America, but it may justly be claimed that his essays represent a half-way house between the *Works and Days* of Hesiod and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and the writings of the French encyclopædists of the eighteenth century and the 'diffusionists' of to-day.

If study of these semi-natural conditions in juxtaposition with those of civilized life played a part in moulding the thought of the Renaissance, it was more dynamically responsible for preparing the French Revolution. I have tried to tell elsewhere (*The Golden Age*, 1927) the story of Saint Pierre, Diderot, the Abbé Reynard, d'Holbach, Rousseau and others, and of the corresponding English school at the opening of the nineteenth century, in criticizing the social environment of civilized man set over against a more natural one. Here, too, the philosophers drew their material largely from American sources. But the fruitfulness of their work was frosted and its continuity broken off by the industrial revolution in England and the triumph of Napoleonism in France. The new orientation of thought was as hostile as it well could be to the vindication through the historical method of the spirit of man, and both speeded the impetus and fortified the arguments of the opposition body of thought which had grown up in the seventeenth century. This I must barely outline.

Though the historical method known as diffusion has been both baptized with fire and excommunicated with neglect, it possesses one supreme scientific validity — namely, in Buckle's words (*History of Civilization*), that 'Experience precedes theory.' The vulnerability of the

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older anthropology is that theory precedes experience. For it is composed of certain postulates which have hardened into a conventional system. All such dogmatisms are founded upon a traditional background and accordingly we must hunt through the past for the origins of the formulae whose principles we have already outlined. Professor Elliot Smith discovered their fountain head in the famous Cartesian principle of the seventeenth century that progress was a natural form of change. Descartes was obsessed with the idea of the immutability of natural law, and he declared that civilized man progresses in a fixed line of advance just as the lifetime of an individual, animal, plant or human being advances from childhood to maturity. The Cartesian system was greatly strengthened by the failure of the French Revolution and the general reaction which set in all over Western Europe, and became so mighty that it was enabled to overbear the criticisms of Newton and Turgot against it. Newton maintained that scientific inquiry 'must set out from the observation of the actual facts of the objective world.' Turgot took much the same position by pointing out that the analogy between the immutable 'phenomena of nature' and the 'succession of men' was pure theory. The only way of interpreting this succession was by finding out what had actually happened to the sequent generations of men. The analogy, that is to say, between civilized development and growth in the life cycle of an organism was a false one.

In Britain, Dr. Robertson's *History of America* (1811) caught up the Cartesian legacy in his theory of the

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independent development of pre-Columbian civilization in America. Peoples evolve from 'savagery' to civilization through the similarity of climatic conditions, by the 'psychic unity' of the workings of the human mind, and by the pressure of a mechanical law of progress. By such an arbitrary set of first principles, the actual evidence becomes largely irrelevant; theory, that is to say, precedes experience.

We can trace the diffusion of this formula throughout Germany, England and France in the nineteenth century, but a convenient resting-place is the *Primitive Culture* of Edward Tylor in the 'seventies of last century. In this book appears the double theory (1) of the animistic proclivities of the savage and (2) of the 'similarity of the workings of the human mind.' These generalizations were set out by Tylor rather casually,¹ and it was his over-zealous disciples who extended them to cover the origins and growth of civilization in their entirety. They were hugely fortified by joining forces with the Darwinian theory of natural selection and the survival of the fittest, fresh from its victory over the Church. Out of this conjunction was born the misapplication of Darwinian principles to the progress of civilization together with the idea of a mechanical progress prompted into constant action by man's 'instinctive pugnacity,' and occurring independently in different localities. This is the stereotyped dogma which I have summed up under the name of the older anthropology and, because it precedes experience or, in other

¹ *N.B.*—Not to say contradictorily, for his earlier book—*Researches into the Early History of Mankind* (1865)—was diffusionist.

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words, resists what evidence is incompatible with it, it has set its face rigidly against the anthropology of diffusion, which has formed itself naturally from the examination of historical data.

It was Tylor's book which gathered in the harvest of Descartes, and the bread he made of it has been the nourishment of anthropology ever since. Tylor owed much more to the tendencies of his time than to his own rather fumbling theory-building for the subsequent distribution of his ideas. A misreading of Darwin was as powerful an agent of that distribution as Tylor's own adhesion to the Cartesian idea.

But an even richer soil for the growth of this weed of thought was Victorian industrialism itself. By subordinating the art of living to the acquisition of power and the human equation to its institutions; by vociferating that it was conflict and competition that made the world go round; by suppressing all natural impulses as vile and hedging the acquisitive sense with divinity and by being utterly regardless of what mechanical progress was for and what it was making of beauty, happiness and freedom – the age, with all these tributaries converging into one channel, readily bore the Tylorian barge down its swollen waters to the estuary of the 'Great War.' The 'savage' theory was a true reflection of the genteel society in which it flourished. The clash between the old and the new anthropology is inevitable for this reason alone, that the new leads back into the kingdom of ideas the rightful heir who has been dethroned from it – the human being. The diffusionist, then, in no wise rejects the idea of progress. On the contrary, by detecting

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the reactions of institutions upon human values, he enshrines those values as the true key to the happiness and fellowship of men. His belief is that the Sabbath or the institutional environment of society was made for man, and he shows by the historical method how one civilization after another has fallen into barbarism as soon as they fell into the cardinal error that man was made for the Sabbath. What the diffusionist does reject is the idea of progress interpreted in terms of the external fabric of life – the mastery of the machine, the idealization of the system – rather than in terms of the human spirit itself.

IX

WHAT IS DEGENERATION?

WERE it not for certain tendencies in modern anthropology, the almost complete neglect of the melancholy but engrossing theme of degeneration would be inexplicable. Nowadays you will hear intelligent and public-spirited people ventilating topic after topic with the utmost freedom, and subjecting laws, conventions, institutions, comfortable dogmas, things that in the last century were sacrosanct and taken for granted, to fearless analysis. But of the great problems of degeneration you will rarely hear a word. Modern thought in this respect merely follows anthropological teaching. From it, beyond casual references,¹ you will gather nothing of the meaning of this rather terrifying truth – the decay of past civilizations, its causes and characteristics.

Why is this so? Why are we denied scientific light upon data whose validity is not in doubt and which are so important to ourselves? For if we get to know why older cultures went downhill, we acquire a sharper insight into the stresses and maladjustments of our present social fabric and so how to rectify them. Why, then, does anthropology turn a Nelson eye to the problems of degeneration? The answer is because such problems conflict with the evolutionary doctrine of

¹ *N.B.* – The exceptions to this rule are fully discussed later on.

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modern ethnology. By this I mean the view (see p. 173) that civilization developed by gradual stages out of 'savagery,' and has climbed the ladder of improvement from the beginnings to our present eminence. In discussing degeneration, therefore, I have very little modern to go upon but the actual facts, except what pioneer accumulations of evidence there are upon a subject tragic enough in itself, and yet full of hopefulness for correcting the errors of the past by the enlightenment of the future.

I. DEGENERATION IN ACTION

In early times, degeneration in civilized conditions of life, in the humanities and in the arts and crafts, was a universal process. It confronts the student of history everywhere; its causes were multiform and its types and criteria are often very different. For clearness' sake, I shall confine myself to the earlier cultures of the world, and from them include only the most telling examples. By way of these examples we can detect in what directions degeneration operates and so pass on to a final query — why do arts, cultures, communities slip down from the heights of their own making?

I will begin with instances of the degradation of arts and crafts and top them with a quotation from Professor Langdon in *Art and Archæology*, published by the Archæological Society in Washington. Professor Langdon was head of the Field Museum-Oxford University joint expedition to Kish (Mesopotamia) from 1926-7.

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‘The surprising feature of it all is that the art of the period 3500 B.C.—2800 B.C. surpasses all that came after it. Field Museum now has painted pottery of 3500 B.C. never again produced before the Greek period, and statuettes of remarkable beauty of 3300 B.C.—2900 B.C. entirely superior to anything subsequently produced in Western Asia before the Greek schools of culture. It is difficult to understand how human endeavour fails to maintain its noble achievements. Least of all had one expected to find man endowed with such genius at the dawn of history. But our records prove it, and the Museum possesses full evidence of this tragedy of human history.’

This generalization must be extended not only to the whole of Mesopotamia, but to the early settlements of Turkestan, Northern Greece (Thessaly), South Russia and along the Danube. At Susa and Anau and likewise in Europe, the famous painted pottery, common to so many settlements in conjunction with gold and copper, reached its highest development both in decoration and technique almost at its very first appearance. ‘As time goes on, however, it decreases in quality and quantity alike; the designs become cruder and the vases coarser and clumsier in shape. Thus, almost from the very beginning, we have to deal with degeneration, for in the earlier strata the pottery is better in technique and painted wares are more plentiful.’ (Wace and Thompson : *Prehistoric Thessaly*; De Morgan’s monograph on Susa; Report of the Pumpelly Expedition to Anau;

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Fleure's and Peake's *Priests and Kings* and *Peasants and Potters*.) In *The Times* of March the 21st, 1926, Professor Langdon also describes the superiority of Mesopotamian ceramics 'over all succeeding ages in Babylonian history.'

If we turn to the mainland of Africa, we find dramatic evidence of the decline of pyramid building between the fifth and twelfth dynasties of Egypt. Not only were those of the twelfth much smaller and their masonry fitting with little of the marvellous precision to a thousandth part of an inch of the earlier pyramids, but their cores were built of rubble and even sand instead of the finely worked limestone blocks of the fourth and fifth dynasties. It is, indeed, safe to say that in every form of æsthetic and architectural creativeness the Old Kingdom of Egypt was superior to all the succeeding ages of Egyptian history, in spite of certain intervals of sumptuous recovery. Professor Reisner has worked out with masterly skill the degeneration of techniques in Nubia, whose pottery and other objects of the late pre-dynastic period almost equalled the beauty of Egyptian craftsmanship in the same period. Thenceforward, Nubian art fell rather than ran downhill until it came to reflect the brutalizing conditions of Nubian savagery in its later developments.

Travel farther south to the mysterious and massive pre-historic civilization that grew up in the neighbourhood of the gold and copper mines of Rhodesia, Mashonaland and Namaqualand. The culture of the 'Zimbabwes' was divided into two periods. The first was marked by great solidity and strength, by plainness

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and first-rate workmanship. So solid was the construction that a wagon with a span of sixteen oxen can to this day pace the walls. The second period abandoned the elaborate drainage system of the first, that reminds one of that of Knossos, the capital of Crete. Its pottery had deteriorated with the quality of the building materials, the workmanship was altogether cruder and more careless, and all the buildings were set up on a smaller scale. Suddenly, almost in the passage of a night, the Zimbabwees were deserted, and their only inhabitants prior to the coming of Europeans have been natives who have lost practically the whole of the intricate culture and accomplishment of their predecessors before the dawn of history. This instant abandonment of mining areas, making a subsequent wilderness of once flourishing civilizations, also occurred in India, Siberia, Central America and elsewhere.

I will hasten over a few more striking examples before we pass on to others of the crumbling or extinction of whole civilizations. The conventionalization of animal figures into mere symbols or geometrical patterns marks one form of degradation. Thus the Egyptian leopards on button seals became so formalized in Crete that only their tails were left. Dr. Haddon describes how lion and crocodile representations in the Pacific were abstracted from reality into almost Euclidean designs. Migrants from the Carolines with their ambitious megalithic monuments came south to New Guinea, and the club-houses of the latter lost their projecting gables and other architectural features peculiar to the former. The disappearance of many useful crafts is part of Pacific

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history. Thus canoe-building vanished in the Torres Islands and Mangareva (Gambier Islands) and became much simplified in the Banks Islands. Pottery-making, an industry once distributed over most of Oceania, fell into disuse over the whole of Polynesia, and an inferior ware survived only in two places in southern Melanesia. Professor Seligman points out that the break-up of craft traditions through warfare was the cause of the disappearance of the stone adze in Woodlark Island. So marked is the coincidence between the persistence of useless taboos and the elimination of useful crafts in Polynesia that there is no disagreement among ethnologists as to the earlier navigators of the Pacific possessing a far more highly developed civilization than their successors.

In spite of his own 'from lowly to sublime' theory, Tylor himself gives many examples of degradation. 'Decline as well as progress,' he says, 'really goes on in the world.' The Spanish conquest of the Moors in Andalusia and of the Incas in Peru reduced their respective irrigation lands to parched deserts. The Chinese, he remarks, no longer make the magnificent *cloisonné* enamels and the exquisite porcelain of their ancestors. 'It would seem,' writes C. F. Oldham in *The Sun and the Serpent*, 'as if the Asuras (the pre-Aryan colonizers of India) had reached a higher degree of civilization than their Aryan rivals.' The Aryan conquests of most of the centres of civilization between India and the British Isles introduced in every instance a poorer, less constructive, more debased and imitative type of culture.

Some of the most speaking witnesses to degeneration

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come from America. 'The ancient cities,' wrote Tylor, 'with their wonders of masonry and sculpture, are deserted, the special native culture has in great measure disappeared, and the people have been brought to a sort of low European civilization.' The American anthropologist, Spinden, remarks of the art of the Maya, the earliest and the highest civilization of pre-Columbian America, whose ruined cities are now being tumbled to dust by the devouring jungle: 'Maya art was on a much higher scale than any art in America except, possibly, the textile art of Peru.' 'The æsthetic art of the Maya in its most spiritual and imaginative phases was blotted out by some potent social change.' As Dr. Gann, who is now excavating Maya sites, tells us: 'The Maya, who enjoyed the highest civilization in America before the Conquest, have dwindled to a poor degenerate remnant of a once great nation, their traditions lost, their civilization forgotten, their numbers decreasing from year to year, till in another century it is probable that no single individual of pure Maya descent will be left upon the American continent.' Between Maya and Aztec art in Mexico exists an unbroken continuity. In æsthetics, how steep the gulf between them! Mexican art is an over-elaboration and conventionalization of Maya style, design, technique and motives, with an infusion of more than ugliness, a something positively evil. If a student of it were unaware that the Aztecs were cannibals and warriors, with appalling sacrificial rites, he would guess it from their art.

It will be apparent that the phenomenon of degeneration has not been one confined to certain specific arts

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and crafts, nor to a few localities of the earth's surface. The decay of this craft, the loss of that art — these have been the rain of pebbles in a landslide. The silence of the once teeming Zimbabwe, the desolation of the blossoming Maya cities, the now sterility of Crete, are paralleled by the vanished splendour of forlorn Angkor Wat in Cambodia, the great city whose walls and palaces and temples were 'the expression of a tremendous energy and a passionate love of art,' and whose bones are now the prey of up-thrusting sapling and clutching vine. The brilliant townships of Harappa and Mohenjo Daro in the Indus basin, whose citizens grew cotton for textiles, possessed an underground drainage system, laid out regular streets, built many-roomed brick houses, produced glazed fabrics, domesticated the elephant, practised a highly developed glyptic art, were accomplished weavers, goldsmiths and jewellers, manufactured vessels of copper, silver, shell, and painted pottery, and maintained a steady intercourse with Egypt and Sumer, were suddenly deserted not long after 3000 B.C. For nearly five thousand years they have been buried in silence until a few years ago Sir John Marshall swept the dust of ages from their forsaken streets. Such a spectacle so tragic and world-wide, and invariably, so far as the evidence goes, the work of barbarism, invites an elegiac meditation in the manner of Sir Thomas Browne. The vanity and frustration of human effort are poignant in the words of A. R. Wallace in the *Malay Archipelago*:—

‘Sculptured figures abound, and the ruins of forts, palaces, baths, aqueducts and temples can be every-

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where traced. One is overwhelmed by the contemplation of these innumerable sculptures, worked with delicacy and artistic feeling in a hard, intractable trachytic rock, and all found in one tropical island. What could have been the state of society, what the amount of population, what the means of subsistence which rendered such gigantic works possible, will, perhaps, ever remain a mystery. The inhabitants now only build rude houses of thatch and bamboo, and look upon these relics of their forefathers with ignorant amazement as the undoubted production of giants or demons. The traveller is led to ponder on the strange law of progress, which looks so like retrogression, and which in so many distant parts of the world has exterminated or driven out a highly artistic and constructive race to make room for one which, so far as we can judge, is very far its inferior.'

And Tylor himself, who must bear the brunt of the blame for the neglect of reversion in anthropological study, has smitten his own theory by the following suggestion: 'It would be a valuable contribution to the history of civilization to have the action of decline and fall investigated on a wider and more exact basis of evidence than has yet been attempted.' However sketchily and uncertainly, let us make that attempt for the rest of this article.

2. TYPES OF DEGENERATION

Before interrogating the meaning of degeneration as a whole, I must devote a little space to certain types of

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it that can be identified. One of these is the reversal from great mastery, skill and richness into rawness of technique and crudity of execution. The school of the diffusion of ancient civilization from a single source holds, for instance, that the megalithic tombs (the dolmen and the chambered long barrow) of Western Europe were descended from the Egyptian mastaba-grave and the Cretan rock-cut sepulchre. If this be so, we have a relapse from elaboration and sheer hard work to roughness and simplicity. If, again, the carved obelisk be the parent of the unhewn monolith, we are witnessing a loss of ornament and of the power of sculpture. But there are so many uncontroversial examples of this particular form of degradation that we have no need to illustrate the theme where division of opinion exists. The art of drawing in three dimensions was known to the primitive cave-men of France and Spain; it was lost by the introduction of civilized life and not rediscovered until the Renaissance, 3500 years later. Thus the Mediterranean spiral declined to a child's tracery farther north. In England, the intricately carved crosses of early Northumbria generated a long pedigree, which ended with the rude, uncarved wheeled cross just antecedent to the Norman Conquest. It is within this province of degeneration that orthodox ethnology has so seriously misled us. Proceeding upon the assumption that a fumbling technique and crudity of workmanship spell first experiment, the tentative beginnings of an evolving art, it has passed over the historical proofs that such immaturities are very often the fruits not of first but

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second childhood, and represent not the early steps towards power over materials but the last away from it.

I have already dealt with actual loss in arts and handicrafts useful to the community, and this is merely carrying the process of over-simplification to its logical extremity. A further type of degeneration is the precise opposite – the tendency towards over-elaboration. I have given an example of this from Aztec art in Mexico, the prototype of which was the simpler, stronger and large-minded æsthetic culture of the Maya. Another example is the conventionalization of animal drawings and paintings into geometrical patterns. This represents a trafficking with symbols which leads to a loss of touch with concrete reality, and thus we meet with a third manifestation of decadence concerned rather with a psychological attitude than with the more objective arts and crafts. A very striking instance of this appears in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* of the New Empire, between the first and second millennia B.C. A sinister change has come over the character of Egyptian religion, which I may roughly summarize as a change from white to black magic, and a transformation of the ancient gods from a concrete and fairly human reality to malignant abstractions. Over-elaboration, in fact, accompanies a new cult of fear and demonism. The Egyptian religion of the Old Kingdom was devastatingly literal and material, but it expressed no fear of the gods and was solely occupied with the creative principle of life. The religion of the New Empire was obsessed with the destructive principle and dwelt in a land of darkness, where every form of

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symbolic exorcism was needed to outwit the activities of evil spirits. An example in little of this tendency was the metamorphosis of the old lunar and cow goddess, Hathor, whose function was the giving of life, into the serpent-headed Medusa, who turns men into stone with her glance (see Hartland's *Legend of Perseus*). It will be evident from my next essay, 'The Origins of War,' that warfare itself played an incalculable part in fostering this type of decadence.¹

Precisely the same change of religious outlook occurs among the barbaric Celtic tribes who destroyed Crete and broke up the megalithic civilization of Western Europe. It is a sentimental mistake to misinterpret the thoughts and habits of these warrior nomads as those of a stern and rugged simplicity. On the contrary, their minds were like the thicketed recesses of a tropical jungle, mottling or excluding the beams of reality. They were so peopled with delusions that Professor Rhys describes their religion as 'a cult of terror,' and their lands as inhabited by 'an indefinite number of hurtful and malevolent spirits, goblins and ogresses of all kinds.' It is extremely interesting to note a parallel to this in early Christian art. 'Satan n'apparaît nulle part dans l'art des Catacombes,' writes Emile Mâle in *L'Art Religieux du Douzième Siècle en France*. 'De ce grand art chrétien des premiers siècles rayonnent la sérénité et la paix. Tout est lumière encore, rien ne fait pressentir le demi-jour des temps qui vont venir.' It is quite evident that phantasmagoria is a definite expression of degeneration, and it goes

¹ N.B. — Tylor himself admitted this in his contradictory fashion.

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hand in hand with a corresponding decline in the arts. Celtic culture was, for instance, in spite of the more extended use of metals, greatly inferior to the megalithic culture it supplanted, while Egyptian art of the New Empire had lost the power, freedom and originality of the older creative periods. Mortuary art became degraded into exact reproduction, and the portrait statue was identified with the mummy itself. Conventional and inelastic forms held despotic sway over the artist. As Professor Breasted puts it: 'A deadly and indifferent inertia fell like a stupor upon the life of the nation, and the development which now ensued was purely institutional and involved no progress in thought.'

We are thus brought into touch with a fourth manifestation of decadence which I shall call the loss of the human element in the external formalisms of dogmas, institutions and systems. It is evident that this symptom is not only on all-fours, but actually contemporaneous with the two previous ones I have discussed – namely, the cult of demonism and the transformation of the life-cult into the death-cult on the one hand, and the complication of symbolic subjects in the arts on the other. Prescott, for instance, in *The Conquest of Peru*, writes of Aztec cannibalism as follows: –

'Human remains were served at banquets teeming with delicious beverages and delicate viands, prepared with art and attended by both sexes, who conducted themselves with all the decorum of civilized life. Surely never were refinement and the extreme of barbarism brought so closely into contact with each other.'

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Or, if we revert back to the Egypt of the New Empire, we may quote the judgment of Herodotus that the religion of that period was 'one of innumerable external observances and mechanical usages,' in which (Professor Breasted) 'the creative age of inner development' was smothered in punctilious formulæ. Sacerdotalism, rigidity of caste, the idolatry of the State combined with a blind traditionalism petrified the life of the most creative nation of antiquity, and, at long last, delivered her people into the hands of the Persians.

Actually, this form of degeneration is not different in kind from that referred to on the second page of this essay – and so we can bring the wheel full circle by putting our finger on the root cause of decline – the domination of the past upon the present. I refer to the decadence in the arts caused by the migration of a people, or rather small section of a people – for that is how human migration usually occurs – from its homeland out into the wilds. The earliest metal-using settlements that spread out between 3000 and 2000 B.C. to Susa, Anau, Thessaly, Troy, South Russia and the Danube are an example of the degeneration of handicrafts which accompany such dispersions. The painted pottery of these settlements was inferior in quality to that of the centres of civilization whence they came. A similar process took place in the Pacific when the first wave of Indonesian colonists spread into Melanesia and Polynesia. In like manner, the settlements grafted out from the original land of the Maya realized a lower degree of culture than that reached by the Mayas themselves, while the tertiary settlements, distributed from these

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secondary centres, showed a still further decline. It is plain that the main cause of this type of degeneration was a tenacious holding on to a set of fixed ideas transplanted out of their proper environment.¹ *Caelum non animum mutant, qui trans mare currunt.*

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We can thus venture upon a generalization from a large body of evidence of which I have only had the space to give a portion. That is the organic and inseparable relationship existing between the condition of the arts and the social or political environment of the people who practise them. The study of degeneration teaches us that they are interdependent, and in more numerous, subtle and delicate ways than I have been able here to indicate. Social and political conditions are, in themselves, either a travesty or an expression of human values – their externalization, so to speak, in corporate life. In other words, the problems of degeneration are intimately bound up with some distortion in the proper flowering of the human spirit occasioned by – but that draws me into the final question as to the causes of retrogression in the arts and of the historical lapses of civilization into barbarism. They give us a very different view of degeneration from that held by the Greeks, by Vico in the eighteenth century, Hegel in the nineteenth, and Dr. Spengler in our own times. To the Greeks, degeneration was as inevitable a natural process as the Fall of Man was the foundation

¹ *N.B.* – I have dealt at length (p. 248 *et seq.*) with the distribution of Buddhism, whose decline was for the very opposite reason.

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of Christian doctrine to the mediæval theologian, and as an undefined mechanical law of progress is the alpha and omega of a modern anthropology dependent upon the Tylorian dogma. The Hellenic mind conceived degradation as a predestined lapse from the primal perfection, the Golden Age of Hesiod, when men built no houses, valued no metals, sowed no seeds and made no wars. It was an ineluctable law of reverse growth operating according to the order of Nature, and no more to be avoided than geological denudation, or the passage of youth into age and of summer into winter.

This amazing idea that civilization is a kind of Big Ben, wound up to go a certain length of time and then rewound, is still in our midst. Dr. Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West* was published (Vol. I) three years ago. The defects of this portentous volume have been so searchingly analysed by Dr. R. G. Collingwood in the September (1927) issue of *Antiquity* that I cannot do better than condense his method of dissection. Dr. Spengler's treatise is really no more than an ingenious paraphrase of the Greek idea, carried on from Plato's theory that history returned upon itself every 72,000 years, from the 'circular movement' of Polybius, and so on to the further essays in the automatics of comparative degeneration formulated by Machiavelli, Vico and Hegel. All of them regarded the decline of arts and nations as an inevitable process analogous with the life-cycle of an organism. Descartes regarded progress in exactly the same light.

Dr. Spengler divides history into discontinuous sets of cultures, each with a particular stamp of its own and

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all of them passing through seasonal changes which take an identical course. Thus the spring of a specific culture represents an agricultural phase in which mythology in epic and legend is paramount. Its summer is urban and witnesses a realistic and anti-doctrinal revolt against the conventionalization of myth; its autumn is still more rationalist and registers a bad harvest in the increasing poverty of the spiritual and individual life, while winter marks the dominion of materialism, of scientific opportunism, of intellectual inertia and of academic dogmas concurrently with the extinction of the inner life and its flowers of art. Thus the Renaissance was summer's revolt against the Gothic spring, while other analogous movements were the Egyptian reaction against the Pyramid style and the rise of classical Hellenism in opposition to the Homeric culture. From Hellenism we step to the Hellenistic phase of Alexander, just as Napoleon took the European world towards winter in the approaching triumph of the great city over the country, Imperialism over the self-contained State and money over politics. To-day, materialism, plutocracy and demagogy are the reigning trinity of a winter once more returned.

As Dr. Collingwood justly points out, this method is not historical at all. It is a morphology of cultures in which one four-seasonal phase represents, say, the whale, and another, say, the elephant, animals with different functions but with homologous parts, exercised in a contrasted environment. Dr. Spengler is a comparative anatomist of historical periods. In segregating and labelling a plurality of cultures, he ignores, first,

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the driving force of human idea and effort which originates all cultures; second, the continuity in diversity which unites them; and thirdly, the truth, which, in order to be bundled into a ready-made system of abstractions, is squeezed out of all semblance to itself.

The keen eyes of Dr. Collingwood have easily detected this fundamental fallacy, and promptly see nothing but a monotone of history in his own theory of decadence developed in the following number of *Antiquity*. His idea of an undulating landscape is that it is a plain. The truth about degeneration is that there is no degeneration. No art is ever decadent, because 'it authentically and eloquently expresses its own proper ideals.' All movement, that is to say, is a movement away from something. The 'rise of Christianity and the unearthly beauty of Bellicia (the Byzantine figure of that name) is the death of Paganism and the earthly beauty of Hegeso (the figure on the Athenian stela)'; the rise of the steamship means the decay of the sailing vessel and so on. So this so-called decay is merely a synonym for life, because it proves that the spirit of man is no longer content with its old home; it has flitted and made unto itself another. Thus no period is either better or worse than the one that preceded it. Since the solution of the problem of one age is the rise of another in the next, conceived in a different mood, speaking a different idiom, and groping towards a different ideal, history is a continuous progress and decadence a purely subjective illusion. It is born of the historian's ignorance of or prejudice against a particular epoch, which becomes luminous and admirable as soon as we get to know it.

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So, very comfortably, by means of argument lucidly, realistically and cunningly designed, we find ourselves back in the toils of the evolutionary fallacy misapplied (see p. 145) to human society from the structural processes of the animal kingdom. The true counter to Dr. Collingwood's architectural composition in abstract logic is that the facts of history are selectively drafted, as in Dr. Spengler's theory, into it. His argument is a counsel of perfection, not history. If the spirit of man is always discarding from period to period its old clothes for new, why did Buddhism decline into a mocking image of itself? Why is history distinguished by sudden hot-geyser bursts of creative activity, as in the French Revolution, the Renaissance, classical Greece, the Pyramid Age of Egypt and the early pre-dynastic period? They were eras of emotional and intellectual combustion, which identify them for all time as radically distinct from other less dynamic periods that anticipated and followed them. They were the explosions of a new life like the rain of flowers that enamels the winter of the northern tundras in almost a single night. There is magic in them; they are, in a sense, miracles of the flowering human spirit. Well, we know there are no miracles without antecedent causes, and the organic cause for all these divinely human exfoliations was plainly the removal of some inhibition which was cutting off or obscuring the direct contact of human experience with reality. Man has kept on losing and finding himself again throughout history, not in periodical recurrences, but according to his own power of resilience in conflict with dead ends,

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dead thoughts and dead men. What Dr. Collingwood is trying to persuade us is that twilight is a synonym for sunrise. Even his historical juggling with Paganism and Christianity is utterly misleading. Early Christianity escaped from the external forms of moribund Paganism, only to reassert them in its own later established dogmas, when the contact of reality with experience was severed once more.

It is the same in history or the procession of collective human life as in individual human love. Love is so powerful an emotion that, if you get wrong with it, it can tear you to pieces; but if you get right with it, you can remake yourself. And so with human life, of which history is the drama and adventure on a world stage. Get on the wrong side of life and it will knock the wind out of your sails, and becalm you.

The flaw in Dr. Collingwood's reasoning lies in his assumption that each age in solving its own problem opens up a new one for its successor. Each age is thus a renewal of the spirit of man run into a fresh mould. Pangloss himself could not administer a more soothing anæsthetic to the verities of history. To a certain extent we cannot help living on the past, nor, since every new idea is a remodelling and re-illumination of what went before it, is it desirable that we should. But the trouble is that man so rarely uses the past as raw material for the present. He allows his natural inertia, which is his instinctive legacy, to combine with the traditional fabric of ideas congealed into forms, which is his civilized inheritance, to defeat his own spirit which opposes them both. Living with ghosts – that is the generic

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cause and meaning of degeneration in history. In our big cities we have not enough playgrounds for children because the land is cluttered up with cemeteries. So in age succeeding age there is not enough room for the new problems, because the dead squeeze them out of their proper place in the sun. The ages are too timid, too well disciplined into the routine of the past to trust in their own experience, to solve their own individual problems. Ready-made morals, abstract ideas, hard-and-fast dogmas and systems, the parrotism of 'what my father did is good enough for me,' the very meaning of authority, which is the extension of the opportunism of the past into the prohibition of the present — these are decadence. They lack contact with reality simply because they do represent the past, which, by the blessed flux of life, is never the same as the present. Is not the law, for instance, usually at least a century behind contemporary enlightenment?

Every period of decadence in history is the failure of the human spirit to drive its plough over the bones of the dead, and the glory of the Renaissance and other eras of renewal is, not that they reacted from what was good enough for their predecessors, as we do from Victorianism, but that they trusted in their own experience enough to refashion the stuff of it 'nearer to the heart's desire.' Our own age has failed to be creative because it lives with ghosts. Very rightly, it calls them spooks, stuffed with sawdust, but it takes so much notice of them that it can find nothing better to do than turn them upside down, where they walk just as well as on their feet. All reaction from something is a form of

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imitation, and so it is that while the manners and customs of the Victorians are *vieux jeu*, their ideas still prevail, because we have so little that is constructive and revitalizing to put in their place. The age lacks life, for to cross the Atlantic on an aeroplane is merely an extension of Victorian mechanics, the age of money of the age of possessions, the mannish spinster merely the obverse of the man-governed prude, the night-club of the domestic hot-house, disillusioned realism of sham romanticism. But where is the spirit of man that builds out of the errors of the past an airier home for its divine humanity? Progress and decay, originality and imitation, flowering and inhibition are contingent upon external and ultimately man-made circumstances that affect, favourably or adversely, the creative spirit of man. A great emotion can, indeed, master almost any circumstance, but can never be its real self without freedom, and for every triumph of humanity there have been a thousand failures. No historical period has been purely original or purely imitative, and we can only use the words progress and decay through observing the oscillations of the interplay between them. These are highly complex, according to the interactions between the inner life and its environment, the present and the past, man and his institutions. But they are not so confusing that we cannot distinguish in broad outline what age is more progressive and what more decadent than its neighbours. It is an error to assume that the Athenian was less civilized than the New Yorker because he did not know how to permeate the ether with a quack nostrum for dyspepsia. It is equally

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erroneous to assume that the Athenian was necessarily more civilized than the modern European because he did *not* know how to ride the waves of space by means of words and music. The real question is – what did the Athenian do with his particular experience of life and what enriching use do we make of ours?

A continuous progress is thus potential through the ages, since our experience of life is obviously much more extensive than that of the Athenians. But I should say, on the whole, that the Athenian made better use of his smaller experience than we make of our larger, and so was relatively more progressive than we are. For the final test of civilization, of every nation, period and individual, is surely whether it or they or he or she have bound and depressed or freed and expanded human values. 'Human values' is a loose enough term of definition, but none the worse for that, since it can take as many varieties of form as Nature herself. We can all recognize it well enough, just as the father of Achilles recognized the lovely, wayward Thetis in his arms, through all her metamorphoses. Human values are our abiding home. Who leaves them dies; who loves them lives.

The historical facts of degeneration do show that there is no warrant at all for the fatalistic belief either in progress or decay. Degeneration was the effect of certain developments in civilized human society, and what is done by human beings can be undone by human beings. In precisely the same way progress is no automatic line of advance along which society travels, whether it will or no. Progress and degeneration both

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are the consequences of human action, and this elementary truism opposes the Greek conception of mechanical decay and the anthropological conception of mechanical advance alike. It is only by means of the historical method that we can discover why civilized communities do degenerate, and what are the factors which cause this phenomenon to happen.

The theme of degeneration thus seriously undermines the theory that civilization has developed out of savagery, first checking and finally dominating a natural human brutality. On the contrary, we have seen that savagery is the occasion not of progress, but its very reverse, and that it has been civilization itself in certain phases which has been responsible for savagery and the deterioration that goes with it. What does emerge from the evidence is that degeneration, which penetrates into every expression of human life, follows the exploitation of human values. It is when systems, government and institutions get out of touch with human needs and realities (as they are more liable to do in age) that they become formal, cruel and unreal, and cause a decadence both in manners and the constructive energies of the community. A historical survey of degeneration is thus, for all its tragedy, a bringer of hope, light and fruitfulness. For it is surely consoling doctrine that the evils of humanity are the results of external disharmonies, not the inherent curse of its birthright. We achieve degeneration, we have degeneration thrust upon us, but we were not born to it.

X

THE ORIGINS OF WAR

I. THE THREE STAGES OF EARLY WARFARE

THE origins of war are vested in our birthright, our germ-plasm, the inherent pugnacity of our human nature, the struggle for survival by club and stone-knife of our primitive ancestors of the Stone Age. It is to the upthrusting spirit of progress in the savage, manifested in combat and the elimination of the weaker brethren, that we owe civilization, while its disciplines, made possible by the savage, will gradually tame, order and replace the combative instincts we have inherited from him. This is not merely the average, but, generally speaking, the anthropological view of the origin of warfare held almost unanimously to-day.

It is derived from a theory of civilization¹ crystallized in the 'seventies of last century. Already was this set in front of a long traditional perspective reaching back to the seventeenth century before it imbibed and misapplied to human society the more dubious biological principles of Darwin and was finally systematized by Edward Tylor, the Grand Old Man of anthropology. The theory postulates the slow upward growth of civilization from the savage matrix, a process generated

¹ See pp. 138 *et seq.* for a fuller account of this theory.

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independently in various parts of the world by 'the similar workings of the human mind in similar conditions.' For sixty years an assumption which pays little or no attention to contacts between peoples, to the historical actualities of degeneration, to divergencies of culture and to the fundamental distinction between the savage and the primitive, has held the citadels of science and percolated into the mental attitudes both of the general public and of individual thinkers of all shapes, differences and qualities of outlook.

To question it, therefore, is a pretty formidable job, and I would not venture to do so merely on the ground of its unfathomable pessimism, its damning judgment upon our common human nature and its threat of annihilation to civilized nations in the future. For if the disposition to make war be an innate mischief bequeathed to us by Pandora nature, not the most fool-proof of institutions is going to root it out, while the incalculable capacities for destruction in modern warfare make it certain that civilization cannot ultimately survive them. If this theory be true, out, out brief candle of humanity.

My ground for disputing the formula of instinctive pugnacity will be purely historical and factual, and I shall only concern myself here with inferences from the facts when they fashion themselves automatically out of the evidence.

Now archæology presents the early civilizations of the world (appearing, of course, at very different dates in different parts of the world) in three successive stages of culture, each one distinguished by certain social and

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religious phenomena, each emerging organically from the other but introducing fresh modifications and departures of its own. They can be the more readily generalized because they occur in due sequence throughout all regions of the earth where civilization appeared, with the exception that in areas remote from its homelands the first stage is left out. The first stitch in the fabric is dropped. At sunrise, is an agricultural and matrilineal society, in which the presiding deity is the Great Mother Goddess, fertility and vegetation divinities like Tammuz, Ea and Osiris are grouped about her, copper and gold are intensively worked, painted pottery is one of the principal industries and burial rites are being elaborated. Egypt up to the Pyramid Age (the Fifth Dynasty), the early Sumerian settlements of Mesopotamia, Crete more or less up to the Middle Minoan period, and the lesser pioneer townships of Anau in Turkestan, at Susa, in Thessaly, the Cyclades, South Russia and along the Danube are the primary examples of civilized life in its spring flowering. The wonderful civilization of the Indus Valley at Harappa and Mohenjo Daro just after 3000 B.C. manufactured scarcely any weapons at all.¹

The second phase perpetuates certain features of the first, but, besides sprouting several novelties, is much more extensive, complex and highly organized. Nevertheless, its marks of identification, though numerous, are so individually peculiar, even idiosyncratic, that it is possible to give it a distinctive name. Mr. W. J.

¹ N.B. — Gordon Childe: *The Most Ancient East* (1928), p. 207.

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Perry's is the 'archaic civilization,' while away from its centres it is best known as the 'megalithic,' whether it was derived from the higher Mediterranean cultures or not. That there are cultural affinities between the two is unquestionable, and I do not propose to deal with debatable matter in this paper. The ceremonious use of stone for temples, idols, tombs of various type; an intricate symbolism of the dead; mummification in various forms and the search for 'life-giving' substances; agriculture by irrigation; a political division known as the 'dual organization,' human sacrifice and the predominance of a solar cult, a sky-world theology and divine kingship, were some of its more pronounced characteristics. So far as dates are concerned, all we need say is that it succeeded the first cultural phase and gave way to the third at different times and with much overlapping.

The third phase was in many respects so different from its predecessor that it has been confusingly and quite wrongly separated from it. Stone-working and terraced irrigation petered out; a decline in the arts and crafts was general; iron-working was the main industry; a wandering habit replaced that of fixed settlement; flocks and herds became more important than agriculture; political readjustments accompanied cultural changes – and the old sun-cult was ousted by a war-cult. The Celts of Western Europe, the Teutons of the North, the Achæans and Dorians of Greece, the Semites and Kassites of Asia Minor, the Hebrews, the Aryans of India, the Tai-Shan of Yunnan, the Tartars, Huns and other peoples of Central and Eastern Asia, the Maoris of New Zealand, the Aztecs of Mexico can all

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be shepherded into this third phase of civilized growth which began as early as the eruption of the Kassites into Babylonia during the third millennium B.C. and the destruction of Crete by the Dorians about 1000 B.C., and lasted in parts of the world up to the fall of Rome at the hands of these peoples' barbarian descendants and the invasion of mediæval Europe by the Huns.

2. THE GATHERING OF THE WAR-CLOUDS

If we are to understand the meaning of my title, 'The Origins of War,' this preliminary stratification of cultures is indispensable. For no sooner do we arrive at the third plane than we are faced with the historical axiom that its principal activity was war. Warfare, conquest, aggression, heroic adventure in arms were the life of the community. The reason for degeneration in the arts and crafts, for a falling-off in agricultural works and constructional ferment, is at once apparent. Human energy was diverted from creative pre-occupations and re-absorbed into a career of destruction. If, again, the nomadic propensities of these peoples be studied, it is clear that their migrations were purposive. They were directed inwards from the circumference of civilized settlements for the obvious reason that their object was the possession of the wealth of the towns, cities and mining centres that flourished during the second phase. We reach Phase 3, then, to find that war is its driving-force, martial organization the structure of the social fabric, and a military deism and mythology reflected in its beliefs.

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Shift back to Phase 2. Was the 'archaic civilization' less acclimatized to a warlike atmosphere than its successor? Since it was destroyed by that successor (Crete by the Dorians, Cambodia by the Tai-Shan, the megalith-builders by the 'Celts,' the Dravidian 'Asuras' by the Aryans, etc., etc.), since its mode of living was more settled than mobile, as early warfare undoubtedly was, since it was occupied with ritual, building, agriculture and great constructive works, since its worship was of solar and not warrior divinities, the question answers itself.

But that is not quite good enough. For solving a problem so important, we want chapter and verse in the first place, and to see the continuity between Phases 2 and 3 more clearly defined in the second. Happily, that continuity has been worked out by Mr. Perry and others for the Pacific and America, while the records of the countries to the west of them all bear out their researches. We can actually watch the transformation of the old sun-god into the new war-god, of solar into warrior dynasties, and so of social conditions into a new mould. In Indonesia, Toh-Bulu became the war-god of the Kayan of Borneo. Their original ancestor was a sun-god, associated with the Hindus of Java. Ponape of the Carolines formerly possessed a sun-cult destroyed by invading warriors from the south, headed by Ichokalakai, who became the war-god. Tangaroa, the sun-god of Mangaia, was dispossessed by Rongo, the war-god, and the same fate befell the solar Tagaloa of Samoa. The Tongans possess traditions of a time when war was not, and Mariner at the time of Cook's visit to the island

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described how the Tongans learned warfare from the Fijians, who were themselves originally peaceful. The Maoris found a peaceful people in New Zealand, the Moriori, whose ancestral laws forbade all killing of human beings and whose civilization was superior to their own.

‘My belief,’ writes A. M. Hocart, ‘is that a highly civilized people with a theory of kingship akin to the Egyptian and of a peaceable nature occupied the South Sea Islands (with the possible exception of peaceful aborigines in the interior of the larger islands). They were gradually pushed back towards the East by various peoples with whom warfare was a religious function; and who consequently were constantly fighting and killing. I should not like to say that the original civilized inhabitants never did fight, but they certainly did not make fighting a regular practice.’

Gill writes of the effects of the substitution of war-gods for sun-gods, a process which took place everywhere in Indonesia and Polynesia where vestiges of a solar cult can be detected: —

‘The ancient kingdoms broke up into small communities of bold incendiaries and robbers who were engaged in fierce feud one against another. The national character . . . ended by becoming more and more bloodthirsty, revengeful and cruel.’

Irrigation and stone-working disappeared with the solar cult.

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The supreme divinity of pre-Columbian America was likewise solar and in one area after another he was rudely cast out of heaven by a war-god. The earliest and greatest civilization of pre-Columbian America was the Maya, whose settlements in Honduras and Guatemala were, by universal consent, totally unwarlike. But the farther north and the later in time we travel, the more manifest become the symptoms of transition from peace to war. In Yucatan, colonized by the Maya, the figures on the monuments take warlike poses and prostrated captives are portrayed. Later still, the Aztec State in Mexico, which derived its culture from the Maya, has become a pure war-machine, like the Assyrian, and the war-god, Huitzilopochtli, has clouded over the sun-god with his thunders. Among the North American Indians, the Pawnee abandoned their solar religion and enthroned a war-god to preside over their extensive conquests. The Sioux of the Mound area passed through the same development, while the creation myths of the Zuni Indians of the Pueblo region actually describe the metamorphosis from peace to war with its concurrent changes in behaviour. Schoolcroft tells us that the 'non-sanguinary, sun-worshipping Indians were conquered by the ancestors of the post-Columbian Indians.'

In the Old World, west of the Pacific, the same astonishing phenomenon of the Fall of Lucifer occurred in country after country with cultural retrogression for the shadow of the setting sun. With the Aryan invasion of India, the war-god Indra supplanted the Dravidian solar deities, while in Babylonia, Tammuz

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yielded sovereignty to Shamash the sun-god, and Shamash fell before the war-god Ashur.

Mr. Monkton Jones in *Ancient Egypt from the Records*, a very conservative book, has this striking passage: —

‘The tone of the Court and people (Egypt of the New Empire) as well as the Pharaoh echoes the note of the conqueror. Power, wealth, fame, the constant sight of triumphs and the parade of captives had their effect . . . and a pride grew like that of Spain, and seems to have undermined the best qualities of the Egyptians in a similar way. . . . It was at the altar of the god Amon that the sacrificial slaughter of each triumph took place, the Pharaoh, as son of the god, cutting down the victims. Such religious rites not merely permitted but encouraged in priest and people alike a pride and cruelty which could not but provoke reactions in their own nature as well as among the conquered. The gods thus became names of terror and symbols of horrid sufferings and their priests accursed in the eyes of all reformers.’

According to Professor Breasted, the Egyptians were not militarized until the invasion of the Shepherd Kings (the Hyksos) in 1680 B.C., when ‘they learned aggressive war for the first time, and introduced a well-organized military system.’ Before that event, they were ‘usually unwarlike and naturally peaceful.’ Ré, the sun-god, gave place to the celestial war-lord of the Theban New Empire of the eighteenth dynasty and onward.

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The development of warfare in Egypt deserves rather more attention than this perfunctory glance.

First for the Old Kingdom. Professor Breasted gives a full account of the reign of Uni, and this is how he sums up his military exploits: 'The naïve account of these wars left by Uni in his biography is one of the most characteristic evidences of the *totally unwarlike spirit* of the early Egyptians.'

A trustworthy index to the truth of Professor Breasted's words is the character of the Egyptian army in the Old Kingdom: 'The Government did not maintain any uniform or compact military organization. Each nome possessed its militia, commanded by the civil officials, who were not necessarily trained soldiers; there was thus no class of exclusively military officers. They were for the most part employed in mining and quarrying expeditions.' Now let us move on to the Middle Kingdom (*circa* 2000 B.C.). 'As in the Old Kingdom, war continues to be little more than a series of loosely organized predatory expeditions, the records of which clearly display the *still unwarlike* (italics mine) character of the Egyptian.' But observe the transformation in the New Empire and succeeding dynasties. 'The influence upon Egypt of such a foreign dominion (the Semitic Hyksos Kings) was epoch-making, and had much to do with the fundamental transformation which began with the expulsion of these aliens. It brought the horse into the Nile Valley and taught the Egyptians warfare on a large scale.' The Pharaoh was 'now at the head of a strong army'; the character of the Government changed and 'Egypt, having learned war thoroughly,

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became a military state.' 'The army is now the dominant force and the chief motive in the new state. In organization it quite surpassed the militia of the old days, if for no other reason than that it was now a standing army . . . All this is fundamentally different from the disorganized plundering expeditions naïvely reported by the monuments of the older periods.'

The Hyksos invasion thus broke 'the conservatism of millennia' in the peaceful habits of the Egyptians. Now if this historical record, compiled by the foremost authority on Egyptian history, does not represent the gradual transformation of a 'totally unwarlike' people into a warlike one through the pressure of external events which have absolutely nothing to do with 'instinctive pugnacity,' then I give up. The whole story is one of education in warlike habits, for whose origins we have to probe the conditions of social and political environment, not the natural disposition of the Egyptians to make war.

Crete remained comparatively peaceful for two thousand years until the wild invaders from the north put out her life. In Western Europe, the Celtic tribes overwhelmed the sun-worshippers of Stonehenge and elsewhere, who possessed no distinctive weapon of war except the ornamental bronze dagger. The Irish records display the exploits of 'sun-heroes' whose solar prerogatives are derived from the vestiges of the sun-cult. In time these vestiges disappear and the sun gradually sinks below the horizon of the religious firmament, to be replaced by a war-deity clad in the mantle of the fallen Lucifer. As we look down the centuries between

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the two successive cultures, we observe that the bronze dagger has lengthened into the leaf-shaped sword. A cataclysm had overtaken the whole of ancient civilization.

In surveying the relationship between sun-phase and war-phase, we are confronted by certain significances. Firstly, a steep fall in culture accompanied the great change. None of these warlike peoples invented anything new except iron weapons and the war-chariot. Yet their mythology and social organization betray vestigial relics of the old order so abundantly that we are justified in calling them parasitic upon the settled civilizations they bore down with the sword. It can be shown, for instance, that the Celtic peoples did not possess a single element of culture which they did not inherit in a garbled, fragmentary and academic form from the civilization of the Ægean and the megalith-builders. The same generalization holds good for the nomadic war communities of the rest of the world. In other words, there was an organic link between the two planes of culture powerfully suggesting that the war peoples were actual descendants of the settled agriculturists. When Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees to build up a new dynasty and finally gather in the treasures of Canaan, he crossed over from the second phase to the third, from the more to the less civilized and from the less warlike to the more. Be that as it may, it is certain that Phase 3 was a development of Phase 2, and as the main feature of the former was the intensification of warfare, the causes of that parasitic growth must have been incubated in the latter. What they were I shall

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enumerate further ahead. It is more appropriate to remark here that if warfare was in full panoply during the third period, we should expect to find it latent and potential during the second. That is precisely what we do find. Yucatan is the American example, while certain associations of the sun-cult in the ancient East became, as Professor Langdon has described, more malignant than vitalizing. The solar deities of India, for instance, were definitely malevolent and took pleasure in human blood; human sacrifice was an integral part of the 'archaic civilization,' while the older gods and goddesses of Phase 1, when drawn within the orbit of the solar cult, compromised their beneficent, 'life-giving' energies by aspects more threatening.

This brings us back to the first phase. The very functions of its deities – fertilizing and generative – reveal an absorption in life and not with death. The life-giving eye of Horus has not yet become the evil eye, nor has the cow-form of Hathor had time to get used to her translation into the serpent and the lioness. The mildness and fruitfulness of the earlier divinities reflect the social conditions of their subjects, and this is corroborated by the archæological study of their remains. None of the pioneer settlements at Anau and elsewhere show signs of a warlike disposition. Their only weapons were a few maces in some places, and these were almost certainly ceremonial. I have already described the peacefulness of the Egyptians of the Old Kingdom. Crete was entirely defenceless and the Sumerians were ruled by priest-kings intent upon

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irrigating works. Squabbles between the cities were indeed constantly fizzing, and warfare developed earlier in Mesopotamia than elsewhere. But these 'wars' were child's play compared with the brew of the witches' cauldron in later times. At the same time, the dawn of civilization is lighted by an eager creativeness in the arts and crafts (see p. 151), and every new excavation within this period surprises archæologists with the superiority of its products – gold, silver, pottery and building – over the work of subsequent ages.

In their relation to war, then, our three phases are like the three bears in the story, little war for the first, middling war for the second and much war for the third. Since each of the three overlapped and was interlocked with its successor – sun-worship, for example, was a glimmer during the first, in full blaze during the second and setting in the third – warfare must, by analogy with other social phenomena, have been the consequence of conditions slowly maturing in each epoch through changes in those conditions favourable to its growth. It was, that is to say, the by-product of certain mal-adjustments woven into the fabric of civilization and created by it. Civilization was itself responsible for the development of warlike behaviour in men, but not inevitably so, since in that case the earliest civilizations would not have been peaceful. There must have been definite causes at work within and hostile to the constructive elements of the civilized state to have educated men in the adoption of warlike habits foreign to their conduct during their earlier experiments in organized society. What were those causes?

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3. BEFORE THE FALL

Before attempting to answer this question, our case remains incomplete until we have plunged beyond the barriers of civilization altogether, back into those dim ages when mankind was wholly primitive, the period of the Old Stone Age. This was the time before man had acquired the knowledge of agriculture, the use of metals, the capacity to build houses and the power to order his communities into a social pattern. If humanity was less warlike nearer the margin of primitiveness and more warlike at a distance from it, we should expect to find a complete innocence of pugnacity during the eras when it was uncivilized.

There are three methods of approach by which we can test the validity of this logical inference. One is the very ancient and persistent tradition of a Golden Age in the first dawn of human life, the floating legends of which were dramatized in Greek comedy and collected into a coherent narrative by Ovid and Hesiod. Archæologically, their statements of the four ages of man – golden and silver ages (in the figurative sense) followed by bronze and iron ages (in the material sense) – have been verified by modern research. The verisimilitude of their picture of humanity living in a peace unbroken by contention has to be examined through (1) the material culture of the Old Stone Age, and (2) the social conditions of modern primitives who, having missed civilization because of their remoteness from its ken, have stagnated in unprogressive ignorance from the days when their palæolithic ancestors hunted

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the reindeer, the bison, the mammoth and the wild horse.

Now there is no evidence whatever that the men of the Old Stone Age manufactured weapons of war. Their wooden implements have disappeared, but their principal industries were the working of bone, horn and unpolished stone for their cave-art, for domestic usage and for capturing and cutting up game. Had these hunters and fishers been warriors, they must have flaked and chipped stone-weapons, whereas their only implement that suggests a possibly warlike use – the Solutrean blade – was almost certainly ornamental from its thinness of texture and was not employed in pre-dynastic Egypt for fighting purposes, while its modern representative among the Greenland Eskimo is a meat-carver alone.

Obviously our only key to the understanding of palæolithic man, apart from his implements, is the cave-art of Genus Homo proper. That art alone and not the fantastic speculations of psycho-analysis can initiate us into the mentality of pre-civilized man and so instruct us upon his alleged 'savagery.' The puzzle is – find the bogey-man of the museum, the consulting-room and the circulating library.

Astounding is the only word for the neglect of primitive cave-art among artists, thinkers and students of humanity. Here is an art which has a perfect mastery of line; which, as Herbert Kuhn truly pointed out, has grasped all the æsthetic problems of light, atmosphere, movement and mass achieved by modern impressionism; which is based on the freshest and most intimate knowledge of wild nature and is so universal and death-

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less in its appeal that we at one end of civilization can refresh ourselves in a power of creation that emerged before man had a ghost of a notion as to what civilization meant. Here is man untaught, undeveloped and unspoiled by a civilized mode of life summoning out of his inner consciousness for a continuity of thousands of years forms of art the best of which (such as the recumbent bison of Altamira) have been compared with Rembrandt, Durer and the Apollo from the Olympic pediment. What a material for correlating the arts with the humanities, for reaping harvests of ideas about the nature of the artistic impulse, the nature of human nature, the relations of art to culture, the causes of the rise and decline of artistic movements, the springs of imagination, the distinctions between primitive and civilized and a dozen other questions of equal significance! Shelves grown with the archæological data of the Aurignacian and Magdalenian cave-art of France, Switzerland and the Pyrenees; everybody has become interested in pre-history judging by the incredible amount of nonsense that is written and said about it by men of science and letters, psycho-analysts, politicians and anthropologists the world over. Yet the cave-art itself and what it means and what it ought to unteach us, you may devour the entire British Museum Reading Room without being more than a penny the wiser about that.

A book by Professor Baldwin Brown, of Edinburgh (*The Art of the Cave-Dweller*, 1928), helps us to see pre-civilized man in a clearer perspective than ever before.

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The drawing of the noble early Aurignacian La Grèze Bison corresponds with the Egyptian convention of a full-face eye in a profile view of the head. Yet these primitives in their full artistic development accomplished the sense of mass which neither the Egyptians nor the Greeks nor the Romans ever did except by accident. Not until the Renaissance was drawing in three dimensions mastered again. How crude then are our ideas of evolutionary progress in technical power! Professor Brown strikes a like sane and human note when he suggests that the so-called mystical phallic representations in cave-art are simply the way of a man with his mate before sexual relations became so hopelessly artificialized with its taboos and the reactions from them that we writhe in their toils to this day.

This brings me to the primary service which the Professor has done equally for us as for these great impressionists of the prime. Theories about this glorious art are roughly divisible into two camps. The first, inherited from the Tylorian speculations of last century about the savage, reinforced by psycho-analysis, postulates the origins, incentive and purpose of cave-art as magical; parietal art was a fearful and malign rite, practised by a proto-Ku Klux Klan in the dark depths of the caves and enforced by a religious autocracy of which the famous 'Sorcerer of Les Trois Frères,' a caperer dressed in a stag's hide and horns, was a characteristic hierophant. The practical answers to this fantasy-weaving are fourfold. To mix art and magic is usually fatal to the former,

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as the degeneration of pictorial art in 'Neolithic' times amply demonstrates. Next, the data upon which the Tylorians build their surmises are all susceptible of a much simpler and more immediate explanation. The *Trois Frères Sorcerer* for instance is not, when it comes down to brass tacks, more than the leader in what has every appearance of being a mimetic animal dance. Thirdly, the incorrigible confusion between savage and primitive again confronts us. Because our origins are presumed upon the Tylorian hypothesis to lie back in various savage rituals, no distinction is ever drawn between the savage and the primitive, between people in a degraded and stagnant mould of post-civilized law and custom and people with no civilization at all. Fourthly, there is no evidence of the glooms of mumbo-jumbo in the happy creative spirit of these artist-huntsmen. The cave-man, according to Professor Brown and the more recent investigations of primitive behaviour all over the world, was unwarlike, gentle in temperament, generous in his dealings and very considerate to women who were the equals of the men. The hidebound cruelties of savagery were not yet.

The second theory regards cave-art as entirely divorced from utility and practical existence, and was born of the Victorian dichotomy between the artist and the man of affairs, a theory ridiculed by Gilbert and Sullivan and strenuously combated by William Morris. On the one hand your world's worker, on the other your dreamer of dreams, the hot-house bloom the Empire builder kept in his conservatory for an idle hour. According to this theory, the cave-artist was a delicate

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weakling who lived for art while his fellows saw to their dinner.

Professor Brown rejects both these baseless speculations by steering between them and extracting the little nutriment from the much pulp of each of them. The magical theory presupposes a practical purpose in the sense that the representation of animals was a means to ensuring their capture. The Professor strips off the magic from this view and relates it both to the imitative faculty and the confusion between image and original, both of which are indisputable phenomena of primitive psychology. He shows how the artist took advantage of an accidental natural resemblance to an animal on a rock-face to improve upon and finally recreate it as a living thing of which the creator was parent and master. By confounding in some degree the representative with the original animal, the artist transferred his power from the one to the other. In that sense primitive art had a utilitarian background and was intimately related to maintaining the needs of daily existence. But in the act of giving life to the inanimate wall with its occasional dim suggestion of life, the artist lost sight of his end and stimulus in the joys and ardours of creation, the expression of his personality and the bodying forth into a living reality of his mental images. He passed from an aim of practical utility into the rapt if unconscious contemplation of ideal beauty and so secured the due balance between pure impressionism and photographic accuracy. Bread and butter, so to speak, began the good work, but the heavens finished off the job.

To my mind this is the just view of primitive art and

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contains unmeasured possibilities of a truer reading of the remote past than any yet put forward. How does it throw any light upon the origins of war? In two different directions, I think. Cave-art with its utilitarian background reflects both the mind and practical energies of primitive man in Western Europe. Yet none of the motives represented betray any knowledge of fighting. If a Martian, ignorant of the history of civilization, were to examine the pictorial art of any specific civilized period that has come and gone upon this planet, he would need no written record to tell him that men were in the habit of forming themselves into groups for the purpose of killing one another. Had he subjected the Aurignacian and Magdalenian paintings, sculptures and decorative art to a similar scrutiny, he would have discovered an era at least as extensive in time as that of the whole of our successive civilized epochs in which such memorials of strife positively did not occur.¹ He would have inferred that primitive men hunted and fished and danced and loved and drew and carved and chipped and painted and a lot of other things as well. He would not have inferred that they fought their own kind, and if one or all the learned of this earth had pointed out to him that fight they did because man is naturally a fighting animal, he would have replied, 'And did they also propel themselves through the air on a wooden framework because man is also a flying animal?'

¹ *N.B.* — The 'Capsian' art of Southern Spain reveals a few wall paintings in which human fighting is apparently represented. But there is as yet no definite evidence as to the date and period of these bellicose paintings.

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Secondly, when cave-art is unswaddled from the magical cocoon so arbitrarily woven round it, we are able to bring it into contrast with ritualistic representations and ideas which, as I shall try to show, were inseparable from warfare. If the causes of warfare lie hidden within the social structure and religious beliefs of early civilization, we should expect to find an absence or comparative absence of those beliefs corresponding with an innocence of warfare.

4. PEACEFUL PRIMITIVES TO-DAY

The evidence as to the peaceableness of modern primitives I have referred to on pages 46 and 141. If we exclude those primitives who have come into contact with the expanding circumference of civilization, ancient or modern, without having learned to value metals or till the soil — thus retaining their scientific title of primitiveness — warfare is as unfamiliar to the Punan of Borneo as to Nansen's Greenland Eskimo, to the Negritos of the Malay Peninsula and the Congo as to the Northern Ojibway, the Paiute of Nevada and the Californian Indians. Accounts of these scattered peoples, some of whom (the Boethuk of Newfoundland, the Tasmanians and the Dene of the Mackenzie Basin) are now extinct, have been put upon permanent record by experienced anthropologists in the field, and their unanimous testimony cuts right across the systematized theory as to the growth of civilization out of 'savagery.' Primitives are the human babes of wild Nature, but they are not savages; they represent the lowest common

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denominator of human culture, but they are most emphatically not instinctively pugnacious. We cannot ignore or belittle the cumulative mass of first-hand literature (summarized by Mr. W. J. Perry), witnessing to a total lack of the authoritarian organization which alone makes warfare possible. The evidence is too strong to permit us to remain in a groove of thought sanctified by no matter how fixed a tradition of orthodoxy.

Our inquiry into the origins of war necessarily covers so wide an acreage of history that I have been forced to severe compression. But I have roughly surveyed the first four cultural periods of mankind — the primitive from which warfare was absent (corresponding to Hesiod's 'Golden Age'), that of the earliest civilizations when warfare was in its cradle (the 'Silver Age'), the era of the full sun-cult (the 'Bronze Age'), when signs and portents of warfare were accumulating, and the ripened period of war and conquest which Hesiod calls the 'Iron Age' and Professor Chadwick the 'Heroic Age.' It is manifestly impossible to understand any of these cultural planes except in intimate sequence and by reference to what went before each one. It is still plainer that the last three phases cannot be fully comprehensible without considering the first of them all as a background.

The primitive condition of mankind represents the raw material of human nature, the undiluted source of human conduct before manipulation by the institutional forces of a civilized mode of living. It follows, as I have already said, that that mode of living must have

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sown the dragon's teeth of war, and that if mankind had remained primitive like the Punan and the Eskimo, it would, like the latter, have possessed to-day no word for war in its vocabulary. Before dealing with the novel conclusions which this survey enforces, I will give an example among many of the generalization we have now reached – namely, that war was an acquired characteristic of civilized mankind, not an innate possession of human nature, like the instincts of sex and self-preservation. Of the extinct primitive Dene of Canada, one branch was entirely peaceful; the other, which was certainly affected by civilized influences from without, developed a tendency to violent behaviour. If mankind were inherently combative, and the 'cave-man' the ogre that the circulating library paints him, why did one branch of the Dene Indians, one division (the Alaskan) of the Eskimo race, one section of the Algonquian Indians acquire a warlike habit and the others remain wholly peaceful? The answer is self-evident. The former learned warfare by contact from without, the latter preserved the peacefulness natural to them, to all primitives and so to human nature by the absence of such contact.

5. SOME CAUSES OF EARLY WARFARE

Since, therefore, pugnacity is not inherent to men in the first place, and not a stimulus to progress in the second – war and degeneration were inseparable as we have described – we are led to examine some, at any rate, of the causes which made warfare possible and

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men sufficiently inured in hardness of temper and bluntness of sensibility to overcome their natural reluctance to destroy their fellows wholesale. The answer must lie and does lie in the beliefs and institutions of the first two phases of civilized society, and particularly in the second.

I have mentioned human sacrifice as an institution of the 'archaic civilization.' Being causally bound up with agriculture, the kingship and the worship of the Great Mother Goddess in her later and less agreeable aspects, its practice became interwoven with the security of the State and the welfare of the community, which have always been naïvely assumed to mean the same thing. We have not to think of human sacrifice as a savagery naturally issuing from the bloody thoughts of untutored early man. It was the product of professional theory, part biological and part magico-religious, spun from the brains of expert philanthropists. Such well-meaning misconceptions have done more harm to mankind than all the savagery it has ever displayed through following their abstract reasoning. The Germans were militarized in a generation, not by the devil in their hearts but officials and professors. Human sacrifice was an entirely respectable institution; it had the blessing both of science and the Church; it was morally desirable and officially expedient, and to do without it would have meant a shortage of the food supply. The priest whose obsidian knife cut out the victim's heart at the altar was conferring a favour upon him, for which service his reward was honours, not the gallows. Blood was the substance of life; life made the

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world go round and without life the gods in charge of the crops and the machinery of the State would have rotted on their thrones. The batteries of the life force had to be recharged – that was all. During the first phase of civilization, human sacrifice was confined to the ritual killing of the king before he got old. His virility was the mysterious force of the ripening grain, the budding fruit-trees, the milk-yielding cattle, and if it failed, a black harvest was the inevitable consequence. So they drowned him when the grey hairs began to signify withered stalks.

In the second phase, we witness an elaboration of the theory and an extension of the practice. King-killing was hardly popular at court and so substitutes had to be found. And it was this institutional development which was most directly responsible for the beginnings of warfare. In two directions. The victims had to be produced, and being often lacking in public spirit, they had to be constrained. Thus we find sacrificial captives of war depicted on the monuments. Secondly, the psychological reactions of human sacrifice effected just that training in habits of cruelty and hardness of heart, in the congealing of natural human warmth, which made the transition to warfare less repugnant. In the Far East, for instance, head-hunting, which was a modification of human sacrifice, was definitely and generically associated with war. Heads were necessary for the fertility of crops and the burials of chiefs, and head-hunting is absent from primitive communities who have no chiefs and no crops. Among the Aztecs, who would sacrifice sixty thousand victims at a single

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festival, war, cannibalism and ceremonial blood-letting were three in one, and they sought not to kill the Spaniards in war but to capture them as a pleasing offering to Huitzilopochtli.

I have devoted some space to human sacrifice for three good reasons. It grows to larger proportions between the three phases of early civilization, as does warfare itself, and links them all together. Its paternity to warfare is clear and its genesis is a beautiful illustration of a clash between institutions and human values, the evil of which lay not in any eruption of natural viciousness, as the childish 'evolutionary' theory of anthropology presupposes, but in a consecution of false reasoning drifted from its proper human moorings and formalized into a system. It was good form to take heads and positively immoral for any reformer to get up and cry halt. The lot of innovators and reformers has always been a hard one for this very reason, and it is these conventional particularities of social environment which exercise a profound influence upon human conduct and change the face of a naturally gentle but decidedly sheepish human nature.

Human sacrifice was not, of course, the sole cause of warlike developments in early human society. The eccentric political alignment known as the 'dual organization' was very prominent during the second phase of civilized growth. Its origin has been traced, rightly or wrongly, to the forcible unification of Upper and Lower Egypt under one crown in 3400 B.C. Be that as it may, this system in which a community is

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formally and arbitrarily split into two hostile but intermarrying moieties reappeared in area after area right across Asia to America and was the occasion over and over again for ceremonial combat. The Mekeo tribes of New Guinea fight over the dual organization to this very day.¹ Here our example reveals a form of warfare originating from the ritual procedure of an unnatural party division and pursued without a vestige of natural animosities. In other words, human beings do not fight one another unless they are wound up by some external machinery to do so.

Other causes embrace a general examination of the social mechanism of the archaic world. Disharmonies were generated by the growth of autocratic power in the monarchy, made possible by earthly deification during the full summer of the solar cult. This cult became a kingly monopoly, and when kings, hedged round by civic restrictions and priestly functions in the earlier period, acquired divine authority and the power of life and death over their subjects, it is easy to see how such powers, growing by what they fed on, dislocated the pacific temper of the early kingdoms. The rivalries of nobles and the institution of private property in land which followed upon the invention of agriculture played an even more significant part in crumbling the primal peace of the world. The reader of Professor Chadwick's *The Heroic Age* (the third phase of early civilization) receives a vivid picture of the enormous turmoil roused by the ambitions of feudal

¹ See further examples in my essay on "The Origins of the Ball Game," p. 221.

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lords and power-greedy rulers who dethroned or exterminated the divine kings of the second phase, and substituted warrior aristocracies with their appropriate celestial machinery for solar monarchies.

Allied with the acquisition of power went the appetite for wealth. The earlier mining settlements valued metals and other sources of wealth for their fictitious 'life-giving' properties. Gold, pearls and other precious things were sought far and wide for selfish motives indeed, but for their potentialities in conferring immortal life and increasing the span and scope of earthly existence rather than as riches. Men quested wealth for life's sake rather than lived to make wealth. In the third phase, we observe a transposition of these aims. If the warlike migrations of the new iron-using, cattle-breeding dynasties be followed in detail, it becomes apparent, as I have remarked, that the treasures of the settled agricultural states were their magnet. In Professor Elliot Smith's words: —

'The careful analysis of all the available evidence seems to point clearly to the conclusion that until the invention of the methods of agriculture and irrigation on the large scale practised in Egypt and Babylonia, the world really enjoyed some such Golden Age of peace as Hesiod has described. Man was not driven into warfare by his instinct for pugnacity, but by the greed for wealth and power which the development of civilization was itself responsible for creating.'

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6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Since my subject embraces so large a field and is jostled by such crowds of dead events and vanished men, let me try to simplify, to over-simplify, it by a summary in semi-narrative.

In Mr. Cunninghame Graham's history, *The Conquest of the River Plate*, we read: 'He (Gaboto) had now entered the territory of the Guarinis, who were the gentlest and most civilized of all the Indian tribes.' They came to him with gifts of silver plate which they had obtained from the Indians of the Peruvian silver mines, but in their own land of Paraguay there were no mines. In these innocent words is centred the whole history of civilization from the Old Stone Age to the present day. Mr. Graham would have made a better shot at the truth if he had said 'gentlest and most uncivilized,' and we may add to his record the statement that the far more highly civilized Incas and Aztecs were by no means gentle peoples, that the reason they were not so had nothing to do with fundamental human nature, but was due to the presence of mines in the districts where they lived, and lastly that the Guarinis were what *they* were because there were no mines in their territories.

This totally novel revolution of accepted values and ideas we owe primarily to the work of one man, Mr. W. J. Perry, the Reader in Cultural Anthropology in London University, who has not only opened up a fresh and clear perspective of how civilization developed, but in so doing has exposed as a fallacy the doctrine held almost universally and equally by priest and layman,

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pacifist and militarist, poor man and rich man: the doctrine that warfare and organized violence are a heritage to us from primitive man.

'It is an error,' writes Perry, 'to think that men in the food-gathering stage were given to fighting.' Explorers have described these modern hunting tribes, to whom war is unknown equally with the dogmas of peace, and who are all essentially alike, however diverse in race or environment. They live at peace not only with neighbouring tribes but with one another, and Father Huguenin, who spent forty years in an island near Tahiti, testified to the absence not merely of violence, but of rage among the natives. These tribes, whether in Arctic or tropical regions, have no slavery, nor human sacrifice, nor State religion, nor ruling class; fair dealing, equality between the sexes, a free and smiling conduct are so normal that no great bones can be made about them.

And this, so far as excavations have revealed it, was the universal condition of early mankind for tens of thousands of years. All the evidence that has been gathered from so remote a period points to the theory that the people devoted themselves to their food supply and the artistic energies that were probably associated with it. We cannot call these qualities 'virtues' because no such (tiresome) word as virtue could have been invented. As Lao Tze wrote of these men of the 'Golden Age': 'They loved one another without knowing that to do so was Benevolence; they were honest and leal-hearted without knowing it was Loyalty; they employed the services of one another without thinking they were

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receiving or conferring any gift. Therefore their actions left no trace and there was no record of their affairs.'

Into these people's fretless lives came suddenly the most profound change that man had known since he had branched off from the anthropoids – the arrival of wonderful strangers, bringing with them large ships, copper tools, various arts and crafts utterly unknown to them, an extraordinary and complex system of religious belief worked out by priests to its minutest details, a habit of mummifying their dead and erecting huge stone monuments connected with ceremony, the administration of justice and the deification of ancestors, a passion for acquiring metals and precious stones, especially gold and pearls, and a method of cultivating certain food plants by terraced irrigation. In every case they were led by great lords who called themselves Children of the Sun, and it was these miner-mariner-migrants who from Ireland to Peru introduced the first civilizations to a naïve world.

Lastly, there is the motive for these world-wide explorations, for we certainly need one to explain how a little Egypt of the Pyramid Age finds itself in the Solomon Islands. The correspondence in place between large stone monuments and mines all over the world has supplied it. What these lordly tramps were after were certain precious substances to which they attributed a supreme value as 'givers of life,' as possessing the power to confer immortality in the next world and prosperity in this, and there is little doubt that some of the immortals of the sky and the underworld were originally nothing

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but the personified forms of these life-secreting substances.

These new discoveries are vitally relevant to the problem of how warfare arose in a human world which knew it not. The important thing about these first civilizations is that the earlier stages of culture were invariably higher than those of a later date in the same country. What we see is a gradual deterioration of culture, building on a smaller scale, inferior pottery and so on, followed by some sudden catastrophe, and in district after district, from Polynesia to Scandinavia, an abrupt disuse of stone-building and a hurried abandonment of the unexhausted mines. And then the 'archaic civilization' vanishes, overwhelmed with warfare.

What happened was that this mining civilization brought with it the seeds of its own decay. In the first place, you get a highly developed people with a rigid class system imposing themselves upon peoples in the primitive stage of culture, exploiting their labour in constructing huge tombs and temples and in working the mines, and teaching them an elaborate cult in which they, the Children of the Sun, figured as divine overlords, rewarded with godship and the sky-world after death. The food-gatherers knew nothing of all this: they just accepted it, as credulous mankind does accept things. They could not understand why they should be punished with death for laughing at animals, for instance, but as they were so punished they refrained from the amusement.

And their rulers? There is practically no doubt that

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all the civilizations of the Mediterranean were peaceful in the beginning, and that their expeditions after mineral wealth were in no sense warlike. They were peaceful because they inherited the peaceable psychology of all mankind. But such power and absolutism as were theirs could not but end in one way, in jealousies and rivalries among one another, in the passing of the pilgrimage for immortality into the scramble for wealth, from the gold of religion into the religion of gold. Quarrels among priests, for instance, brought the first warfare into Eastern Polynesia, and with it a swift decline of culture. Another concrete illustration occurs in the institution of human sacrifice, connected with agricultural rites, and producing petty wars to obtain human victims.

So much for internal disintegration. But the chief cause of the destruction of this ancient civilization was external invasion. It is usually assumed that the warlike communities came down like wolves upon the settled agricultural populations from the wilderness. But they themselves were a decadent product of these settlements and originated from bands of discontented nobles who left their homes with their followers, founded new dynasties, set up nomad military aristocracies with war gods, and attacked the settlements for their mineral wealth. The origin and development of warfare are all one story.

Our brief casts a wholly different light upon the origins of war than those which the speculations of traditional anthropology bid us take for granted. But it is one based explicitly upon the evidence open to us

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and indirectly upon the common experience of us all. What that evidence teaches is that warfare is not the explosion of a predatory and combative human nature but the secondary effect of certain institutions and externals of social system whose origins can be traced to various weaknesses in the constitution of early civilization and whose sequences can be pursued to their ultimate harvest. These institutions were linked with definite processes in the unfolding of organized society, producing in their growth powerful reactions upon human conduct. At the same time, they were in no sense inevitable processes, but rather the result of an artificial dualism between humanity and its social organization. When institutions get out of human control, lose touch with human values, exploit human lives to their own ends and acquire an independent momentum of their own, then there is the devil to pay. The home of that devil was not in the human breast; it was fashioned out of the flaws in the social machinery of civilized man — flaws set up by his blindness and inertia, if you will, but not through his inherent 'savagery.' Warfare is a by-product of society which only flourishes under certain conditions and in a certain environment. Modify that environment, bring those conditions into closer harmony with the humanities, and war, like human sacrifice, its parent, must vanish from the world.

XI

THE ORIGINS OF BALL GAMES

A DETECTIVE STORY

THERE exists a very widespread delusion among all types of men that a large number of our modern activities are either 'natural' in themselves or the product of 'savage' instincts. This delusion takes a variety of more or less harmful forms. The notion that war persists in the world because human nature is instinctively pugnacious is an example of a pernicious fallacy, while the one that a game of ball between two sides is an obviously natural way of consuming a leisure hour or two is an example of false speculation that hurts nobody. Nevertheless, all delusions are harmful simply because they are not true. The idea that it is the most natural thing in the world for people to play ball causes the indirect harm of obscuring our understanding of human life, of the way, that is to say, human society has grown up, developing certain wants and modes of conduct by the action of stimuli which had nothing originally to do with those wants. To answer the question why we behave as we do in many directions of life by declaring it is natural or instinctive so to do, is merely begging it.

It is said, for instance, that the instinct of modesty

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and the natural desire to keep warm are the reasons why we wear clothes. What then are we to make of the historical fact that some communities of men, both in hot and cold climates, did not wear a stitch of clothing? The records of the past tell us that human beings first wore clothing for magical purposes, then for ornament, and lastly for modesty and warmth, which were created not out of instinct, but the fact of wearing clothes. 'There is much to support the view,' writes Miss Virginia Woolf, in *Orlando*, 'that it is clothes that wear us and not we them; we may take the mould of arm or breast, but they mould our hearts, our brains, our tongues to their liking.'

In the same way, the theatre is derived from the dramatic instinct. But the original form of drama was an exclusively religious function, performed to accomplish certain ends totally distinct from art or entertainment or story-telling or the love of watching men and women enacting stirring or moving events. Watching plays was not a consequence of an instinct for dramatic representation: that representation was itself responsible for creating the desire to watch plays. Thus we have to take nothing for granted in the life about us, and that great truth is most strikingly manifested by delving deep into the past for the origins of the ball game.

No sooner are we seated in our time machine and globe-trotting over the continents of pre-history than we find ball games being played as drama was acted, not as a game at all but a ceremonial. So far from being a natural form of recreation, first crudely then skilfully indulged, the ball game of ancient society was an

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artificial elaboration of certain religious beliefs current in that society. What's in a ball game? There is so much in it and these elements are so deeply involved in the whole structure and mentality of early civilization that I feel almost despair in conveying to the reader some idea of the intricate cultural landscape of which the game of ball was once a part. My difficulties are made all the greater from the fact that these component elements of the ball game slide off the one into the other, so that it is impossible to make one aspect of it intelligible without finding oneself mixed up in a second and a third and a fourth. Archaic civilization is like the House that Jack built, and if I try and describe what the ball game meant to the ancients, I shall have constantly to cut the lines of communication between all the activities once interrelated with it.

THE TEAMS

The argument that the game of ball was a natural development of the play instinct would, of course, maintain that it was the game which made the teams. No sooner, however, are we back in antiquity than we find that it was the teams which made the game. Wherever it was played among peoples who retain or retained traces of the archaic culture which once overspread most of the world, we are made aware that it was a formal and sacred rite conducted between two sections of the community whose political existence depended upon this division. This dualism has been analysed by Mr. W. J. Perry in *The Children of the Sun*.

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This dual grouping was a cultural, not an ethnical nor tribal dichotomy, and expressed itself in a fantastic arrangement of opposition and conjunction, of relationship and hostility, which Mr. Perry has derived from the forcible union under one crown of the separate kingdoms of Upper and Lower Egypt in 3400 B.C. All through Egyptian history this dualism was recognized. The Pharaoh wore a double crown; the gates of his palace and his granaries were double, and the very vessels which poured out his drink had double spouts.

Out of this dualism arose the ball game which, in the Pacific, in Morocco, even in places where archaic culture was overlaid by later strata of belief, and very definitely among the Indian tribes from Maine to California and from Mexico to Hudson's Bay, was a ritualistic and spectacular exhibition of this dual grouping in action. It was in no sense a sport, but a religious service and organic to the structural form of early society. The sacred ball game can be traced in Australia (Victoria), in Fiji, and in Yap of the Carolines as well as among the American Indians, and Howitt tells us that 'in playing the game, the two sides were the two classes, two totems or two localities of the tribe. Each side had a leader, and the object was to keep the ball from the other side as long as possible by throwing it from one to the other. Such a game might last for hours.' The white cockatoo clan, for instance, played the pelican clan. He adds that matches were played only on ceremonial occasions and were inseparable from this dual grouping.

Such a dualism had nothing whatever to do with

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our modern system of local, county or national matches of baseball, football, cricket and other ball games, for the obvious reason that the ball game remains while its ceremonial and political framework has rotted with time and change. The only parallel between to-day and yesterday in this respect are House of Commons matches, and such a comparison cracks on application. If after a long spell of dry weather the Government were to play the Opposition in Westminster Abbey; if before the match the members conducted an all-night vigil of fasting, prayer and self-mutilation in order to make sure of going to heaven; if during the match they succeeded in turning themselves into King John, Charles I, William the Conqueror, Queen Anne and other monarchs who were regarded as still reigning both over the next world and this one, and if the mere playing of the match caused the clouds to gather and the rain to fall, then we should have a partial analogy between ball games ancient and modern.

THE SPORT OF DEAD KINGS

The next point of your theorist who argued on *a priori* principles that playing ball was as natural an activity as laughing and loving, walking and talking, would surely be that anybody could play it. To put hand, foot or bat to ball – all the pre-historic Dicks and Toms were mentally capable of inventing it, and any pre-historic Dick or Tom must have been privileged to enjoy it. Inference from the total cultural evidence of the past shows us, on the contrary, that the ball game

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must have originally been a royal prerogative. It was first played not by common folk, but by kings, and divine kings at that, and only by ordinary men who were delegated by the priests to take part in the holy function, and by taking part in it, to assume the rôle of kings. Since kings could very well assume their own rôles and play their own games while they lived, the ancient players were impersonating dead kings. This actually was so, and since dead kings in ancient society were synonyms for living gods, we can go one step further and declare that the players themselves became as gods, kicking, striking or tossing the ball. This sounds preposterous enough, but the true way of studying a problem is to examine its data, and all the data at our disposal unequivocally support these conclusions. Let me take some examples from all over the world.

Evidence for the ball game in dynastic Egypt is confined to a pair of instances, both late. A relief upon the eastern wall of the Shrine of Hathor, in the Temple of Deir el Bahari, shows the Pharaoh Thothmes III of the eighteenth dynasty (*circa* 1500 B.C.) holding an olive-wood wavy wand with which he strikes balls to Hathor standing by. The ceremony was called 'to strike the ball in honour of Hathor the Protectress of Thebes.' A similar example comes from Edfoo, and the throwing of balls was regarded as an emblem of kingly victory.

Or let us turn to ancient Persia. Prince Siavash of the Avesta won a ball-bat match (Iranians *v.* Turanians) by capturing the entire Iranian team, and loud were the acclamations of tambours, cymbals and drums. The

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game was a medley of polo and baseball, played on horseback like polo, and the ball was thrown in the air before being struck as in baseball. Siavash still further distinguished himself by hitting a ball as high as the moon. The interest of these dynastic ball games is twofold. To begin with, the mythological context of the archaic ball game is being rubbed out by the passage of time; next, the intimate relationship of the ball game with royalty is still tenaciously preserved.

Travel from the Persian monarchical annals to the *Odyssey*, and the same associations between the ball game and royalty appear in the Heroic Age of Greece. Nausicaa comes down to the seashore where the shipwrecked Odysseus lies asleep on the Island of Phæacia. 'Anon, when they were satisfied with food, the maidens and the princess, they fell to playing at ball, casting away their tyres, and Nausicaa of the white arms began the song. . . . Then the princess threw the ball at one of her company: she missed the girl and cast the ball into the deep eddying current, whereat they all raised a piercing cry.' And the wave-worn Odysseus awoke.

In the instances from Greece and Persia, we are plainly witnessing a stage of civilization wherein the ball game is becoming secularized and disestablished from the formalities of Church and State ritual. For the more mystical significations of the royal ball game, we have to seek among peoples, not necessarily older or younger in time than Persia of the Great Kings and Homeric Greece, but whose faiths, conventions and ceremonies more closely reflect the beliefs of archaic

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civilization. It is among them that we can distinguish the real players of the immemorial ball game – not ordinary living men and women, but gods and the ghosts of kings.

The ball games of America were played by its great extinct civilizations as well as by the Indians of a later day. The king-god ancestors of pre-Columbian culture, Hunbatz and Hunchouen, Quetzalcoatl and his divine twin, Tezcatlipoca, played a ball game in court. The *Tlaxtli* of the Aztecs was played in a regular stadium, with stone seats for the spectators and carved wooden stools for the Caciques. These stadia were really granite stone circles, with the blocks touching as in the circle round the shaft-graves of Mycenæ and the outer circle of Stonehenge, now disappeared. Outside these circular courts were the burial mounds of the Caciques, whose mummified heads were preserved in baskets. Since the funerary ritual of the dead Aztec lords was also celebrated in these courts, and stone circles all over the world were holy ground for the cult of the dead, we have a further little sum of inference to add to our deposit account. The ball game was somehow mixed up with ancestor-worship and the death-rites of the great. We need not worry ourselves for the moment to link up one aspect of the ball game with another. What must be fairly obvious by now is that the ancients did not play it for fun.

Behind the Indian ball games, says the Bureau of American Ethnology (Vol. 24), lies 'some widespread myth from which they derived their impulse.' The Zuni cup-and-ball, hidden ball, racket ball, and ball

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race games were played by the gods themselves in the persons of the actual players.

Now the hidden ball game of the Zuni was not only a battle between the twin war-gods Ahaiyuta and Matsailema and the 'Creational God' (viz. the Sun-God), whose forfeited head now hangs in the Milky Way, but dramatizes the mythic contests between these war-gods themselves. In the Zuni ball race game one body of players represents the elder God of War and goes north, the other his younger twin and goes south, while the runners wait for the signal from the dead (their stop-watch) before starting the race.

A parallel with the Zuni ball games, not in the methods of play but in the conventional ritual underlying them, is to be found (of all places) in suburban Surrey. The Dorking ball game was played on Shrove Tuesday only, the date of the Roman Saturnalia and of the Osiris festival of rebirth in Egypt, and by players from the east and west sides of the church. This reminds us of the ceremonial dual grouping I have outlined above. The game itself was a furious hurly-burly, preceded by a solemn procession of the streets by the heroes of the test match in mask and costume. Sir Lawrence Gomme calls it 'a relic of old clan feuds' and a festival in honour of the dead. The players not only wore the colours (red and white) of Upper and Lower Egypt, but in donning masks were actually impersonating the dead. An official ceremony like this, reaching back into the dimmest hinterland of the past, was obviously not commemorative of any common dead. It was an ancestral function, and ancestor worship, as

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countless examples illustrate, honoured the memory of kings or great lords who in death achieved divinity. Thus the Zuni and the Dorking ball games, being united in a common observance, vigorously suggest a common origin.

THE CONQUEST OF NATURE

Unless you have made a thoroughly undignified score, and are anxious for the other side to go in on a sticky wicket, it can hardly be said that rain and the modern ball game make a happy match of it. At any rate we do not play games of ball to-day to beckon on a depression. If it were a natural expression of animal spirits for our ancestors to play ball, we should scarcely expect to find the ball game in action among them for the express purpose of affecting the rainfall. In many parts of the world, the antique ball game was much more than a kind of prayer for rain: it was an actual means not only for summoning and decanting the clouds, but for enabling the crops to sprout, the flowers to shine, the salmon to leap the falls, and the earth to renew her winter-weeds outworn. The ball game was in archaic times a fertility rite.

Thus in Morocco the *serrâ* was played with wooden ladles, originally puppets representing the Great Mother Goddess who corresponded with Hathor-Isis of Egypt and the Spider Woman of the Zuni. All over Berber Africa these effigies were rain charms handled by naked women, and no rain would have fallen without playing ball with them. Some of the tribes played hockey, or

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rather its prototype, shinny, others football, others tug-of-war, at fixed seasons and according to the dual grouping of archaic culture. Many of the Indian ball games, especially in the south-west, were likewise an agricultural tonic, a compelling prod for Nature to get on with her business and bring forth the fruits of the earth. The ritual association between the ball game and the Great Mother or Earth Goddess in Africa, Europe and America is impossible to understand on the ground of the ball game being a natural evolution of the instinct for play.

But why, we may ask, should the playing of a game of ball, however showy the pageantry and muddled the heads of the players and spectators, be assumed to influence the order of Nature? It is only by realizing that the ball game was a religious ceremonial instituted by ancestor king-gods who were credited with miraculous powers over Nature that we can answer that question. The divine Pharaohs were rain-makers and the solar and fertility deities of the archaic world were legion. The players, as we have seen by the examples of the Zuni and the Dorking ball games, actually identified themselves with the ancestors they honoured and the gods they worshipped. By so doing they temporarily acquired their magical powers. We observe exactly the same process at work in the mystery religions of classical Greece and the ancient East. In re-enacting the death and resurrection of Adonis, Attys, Dionysus and Osiris, the mystic celebrants themselves died and were themselves ritualistically reborn.

The favourite ball game of the Californian Indians

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and of the tribes from Hudson's Bay to the Gulf was the original form of shinny or hockey, the object of each party being to score goals by means of sticks. The racket game in which each player carried one racket in the northern regions and two in the southern wherein to carry the ball was the parent of Canadian lacrosse. 'Proceeding and accompanying the game, there was much ceremonial of dancing, fasting, bleeding, anointing and prayer under the direction of the medicine men.' The football of the Navaho Indians was only played in the spring of the year, and without it there would have been no crops. The Cherokee racket game was heralded by songs and dances continuing all night long, while each player had his flesh torn into three hundred gashes by a toothed comb. As if this were not enough to stimulate his prowess, he was baptized, and his purificatory exercises tell us without any doubt that the champions endured an initiation ceremony kindred to those of the Eleusinian and other mysteries in Greece, and signifying rebirth and the promise of immortality.

One begins to see why these highly specialized ball games were means to causing rain, securing fertility, giving and prolonging life, curing maladies, expelling demons and directing the seasons.

PLAYING BALL AND MAKING WAR

The theory of ball games as originally instinctive naturally assumes they were a recreation. Yet the early affinities of the ball game are quite definitely with conventional warfare. They were played, as I have

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pointed out, by sides chosen from the dual political organization of the community, and this dualism was a hostile one, and one of the principal reasons for the development of warfare in ancient society. Again and again we are struck with the extreme violence of the players. The Indian ball games, for instance, were a mimic warfare, not because of any natural animosity between the two sections of the tribe, but because the players were representing an ancestral and traditional quarrel between its founder king-gods. I have already described the Zuni ball games as being dedicated and sacrificed to their twin war-gods. Catlin, for instance, gives us a lively picture of the Choctaw racket game, a set mass-shindy: —

‘In these desperate struggles for the ball, hundreds are running together and leaping actually over each other’s heads, and darting between their adversaries’ legs, tripping and throwing and foiling each other in every possible manner, every voice raised to the highest key in shrill yelps and barks. . . . In these struggles, every mode is used that can be devised to oppose the progress of the foremost who is likely to get the ball: and these obstructions often meet desperate individual resistance, terminating in a violent scuffle, and sometimes in fisticuffs. . . . There are times when the ball gets to the ground, and such a confused mass rushing together around it, and knocking their sticks together, without the possibility of anyone seeing or getting it for the dust they raise, that the spectator loses his strength and

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everything else but his senses, when the condensed mass of ball-sticks and shins and bloody noses is carried around the different parts of the ground.'

This is what one might expect when the contestants of so many ball games represent the war and peace parties of the tribe chosen from the phratries or clans by the priests, who, to the accompaniment of music and dancing, urged on the players with frenzied imprecations, incantations and invocations to the ancestral patron gods of each side.

In the Cherokee ball game, an embryonic combination of hockey, football and baseball, in which everything short of murder was permitted, the trainer-shaman of one side, after exhorting his team to drive the other side into the 'Darkening Land' to perish for ever, procures the sky-champions (for the match was Sky *v.* Underworld) admission into the seventh heaven. The backers of each side risked their entire possessions in betting upon the result, and the president of the game, the king, so to speak, at Twickenham, was the sun-god, once himself the ball which, being struck in an ancestral game too high, got stuck in the firmament. The game which followed was a figurative battle.

The pre-modern ball games of England were legion — Bittle-Battle, Buzz and Bandy, Crab-Sowl, Munslets, Lobber, Waggles, Troap, Dab-an-Thicker, Doddart, Kirk-the-Gussier, Trunket, Trounce-Hole, Burly Whush, Hammer-the-Let or Colley Ball, and many others with junketing names as fine. Battledore and Shuttlefeather was a divinatory game — 'Toss-a-ball,

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toss-a-ball, tell me true, how many years I've got to go through.' Stool-ball, an ancestral prototype of cricket, begun on Easter Eve with stakes of kisses, cakes and ale, was originally played within a stone circle like the Aztec *Tlaxtli*; the ball game of Queen Anne was much older than she, for the catcher was an English Hathor or May Queen, while the players of Keppy Ball sought to find a true love for eternity. Though so many fresh cultural interferences have combined to obscure the original double structure of ancient society in England, we can trace relics of this strange dualism of ceremonial pugnacity in some of these folk-games.

But much more clue-speaking were the football matches once played up and down the streets of the town on a fixed day of early spring. These, like the Indian ball games, were summer and winter contests of prophetic and fertility ritual in their origins, just as the old sword-dances retain something of the more ancient Oriental festivals of death and rebirth and blind man's buff of the formalities of human sacrifice. At Bromfield, for instance (see Hutchinson's *History of Cumberland*), a football match was played on Shrove Tuesday, the date of the Dorking ball game, by teams from the east and west sides of the parish, and the ball was thrown down in the churchyard. This reminds us of the traditional French ball games which were actually played in the churches by the priests. At Bromfield the struggle was, which party could carry the ball to the house of the captain of the then defeated side, with three miles, every yard of which was furiously contested, between the respective captains' houses.

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THE ORIGIN OF THE BALL

We have seen that the bat or racket or stick in the ball game meant something – it could be an emblematic war-shield, or magic wand, or a figure of the Earth Goddess. We have seen that the teams and the game itself meant a number of things, each more irrational than the other, and all of them utterly contrary to what we should expect them to mean if the ball game had grown spontaneously out of man's inventive leisure. It seems then that we shall be on the right track through this dark forest of mummery if we infer that the ball too meant something quite other than it naturally ought to have meant. It did. And in digging for its origin, we reach the beginnings of the ball game itself, and so the explanation of all the incredible paraphernalia of myth and ceremony, priestcraft and kingcraft, divinity and duality, physical combat and mental confusion which so tortuously accompany it. 'I believe,' said the Queen in *Alice in Wonderland*, 'as many as six impossible things every day before breakfast,' and that is an understatement of what the ancient ball-players believed. The similarities together with the divergencies of ball game fantasticalnesses in the early world of civilization must have possessed a simple and common origin. It is an obviously untenable theory that mankind could have invented the ball game with all this nonsensical symbolism by spontaneous mental combustion in different parts of the world.

In his story of the evolution of Attic Comedy, Mr. Cornford describes the early mock battles held in

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honour of the Earth Goddess of Ægina, which were much more important for the sprouting of the crops than was the mere sowing of the seed. As Mr. Cornford says, these canonical combats had a great deal to do with the rites of death and resurrection. Among some of the south-western tribes of North America, the ritual combatants struggled for a doll, representing an ancestral figure, instead of the ball, while the Missouri ball game was accompanied by a scalp dance. Mr. Cornford tells us that in various parts of Europe two organized parties fought for a puppet or a doll, while the Dionysiac fertility rite at Orchomenos involved the dismemberment of a youth – just, I may add, as Osiris (the Dionysus of Egypt), Attis and Adonis were torn asunder. ‘Perhaps,’ Mr. Cornford proceeds, ‘this dramatic battle owes its origin to the struggle for the *fertilizing head* of a sacrificial animal which also issued in football and similar games.’

The ball, then, was preceded or sometimes replaced by a puppet representing an ancestral god-king or a dismembered youth or the fertilizing head of a sacrificial animal; the game itself was played by hostile parties as a combined ritual of fertility, agriculture and death and resurrection. It is evident we are getting warm. Where can we find a mythical being of ancient civilization, who was dismembered, who was reborn, who was at once a king and a god, who was related to the Mother of Mankind, who had something to do with agriculture, who synthesizes the various beliefs bound up with the ball game and who was contended for by opposing parties or personages with possibly solar associations?

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And, behold, we have him — no less a being than Osiris himself, whose story fits every single particular of our evidence. He was the Nile which fertilized the Egyptian fields; he was the brother-husband of Hathor, the supreme original of all the countless Earht Goddesses of the early world. He was a king of pre-dynastic Egypt, elevated to godhead. He was killed by his brother Set, the king-god of Upper Egypt, and his limbs were scattered over all the four quarters of Egypt, and then collected by Hathor. Finally, he was mummified by his son Horus, the king-god of Lower Egypt, and attained immortality. Horus himself in his later divine history became the right-hand man of the sun-god Ré, and the bitter feud between Horus and Set (who became the devil) is a reflection of the legendary (but none the less real) quarrel between the Upper and Lower Egyptian dynasties forcibly united under Menes, the first king of a united Egypt, and who called himself Horus, the son of Osiris. The division-in-unity of the two kingdoms was, as Mr. Perry has so patiently and acutely worked out, the origin of the dual organization of early civilization with its extraordinary feature of conjunction - cum - opposition. Place this ancient story beside the evidence I have collected, and surely it is the only rational explanation for and so the origin of the ceremonial peculiarities of the archaic ball game. We know that the head was regarded as the vital anatomical part in the ritual of mummification, and the numerous head-cults of ancient mythological beliefs are variations upon this theory of the embalmers.

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The ball, that is to say, was a symbol of the mummified head of Osiris, whom Professor Elliot Smith has called the inventor of agriculture and the first king and the first god in human affairs. The ball game itself originated in the dynastic quarrel between Horus and Set, and its relations to kingship, agriculture, fertility, death-rites and immortality were derived from the accretions that gathered round the epic of Osiris, the oldest story in the world. Fertility and immortality (life, in other words, on the hither and further banks of death) were won by machinery – by the performance, that is to say, of set rituals. The magical object of the antique ball game, derived from Osiris the great life-giver, was the winning of life. When King George goes to Twickenham to see a Rugby International, he little realizes how immemorial and packed with meaning is the tradition he observes.

The epilogue to our ball-play follows. The story of the ball game reveals the exceeding slow transformation of the formal and the sacrosanct into the secular and the human. In the course of centuries it shredded off its official and supernatural pomps and at long last has come nearly into its own as a human play of skill and entertainment. I say ‘nearly,’ for the public schools of England still retain patches of its ceremonial ancestry and play it as a rite rather than an enjoyment. The answer to the question – why do we play ball – is the same as the answer to the question: Why do we wear clothes, why do we go to the theatre, why do we make war? Because civilization has taught us so to do. Its institutions have brought into play certain activities,

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certain modes of thought and conduct which were not part of our primitive inheritance.

The story of the ball game is, again, the story of the conservatism of mankind in beliefs and opinions that appear to us nowadays to be so crazy, fuddled and unrelated that it is hardly possible to credit their robust survival among millions of men for thousands of years. The generality of men live by tradition, habit and convention, and these at the beginning were the fruit of original ideas invented by a very few men. Such is the history of all inventions, all new ideas, all creative changes, improvements or readjustments in human fortunes or knowledge, and the man of original mind has to contend against enormous forces of inertia and prejudice before he can drive his idea or invention home. Mankind was taught the ball game, and then it took centuries before he could unlearn his lesson and play it for its own sake. The ferment of minorities, the insistent urge of individuals, that is the history of human progress.

XII

THE TRAGEDY OF BUDDHISM

I

BUDDHISM is a religion which is no religion at all in the technical sense, and yet, in spite of its manifest decline both in numbers of adherents and in influence, claims more adherents to-day than any other existing faith. The present total of Buddhists in the world is five hundred millions, or twice as many as that of the Christians—Roman Catholics and other sects included.

The phenomena of the spread of Buddhism are indeed so much more subtle and complicated than those of the spread of Islam, perhaps the most concrete, plain-minded and direct of the world's religions, that it is well to open inquiry with a sketch of the principles of this enigmatic and highly original faith. Buddhism has been called 'more a system of philosophy and practical ethics than a religion,' and this becomes at once apparent when we disentangle the main threads of its system of belief, if the word 'system' can be properly applied to the intellectual concepts of a religion so entirely devoid of metaphysical elements in its ideas, and of an institutional fabric in its methods.

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THE ORIGINALITY OF BUDDHISM

What is Buddhism? It is unique to begin with. Though Buddhism is nearly five centuries older than Christianity and twelve centuries older than Moham-medanism, it gets much nearer than either of them to the modern sciences of evolution and psychology, to the modern rationalist attitude, and to the modern view of the unseen and the unknown. No formalized religion has ever shown such tolerance towards scientific investigation of universal properties, such welcome to knowledge and impartial truth, or, on the other hand, such suspicion of the accepted formulæ of mysteries, as has Buddhism; so much so that one of the Buddhist writers not unjustly speaks of his faith as 'the only religion which is a priori not in contradiction with the discoveries of science.' A Galileo's fate is inconceivable in Buddhist doctrine. Next, Buddhism is the only organized religion which categorically denies the authenticity of the belief in the soul. Thirdly, it does not positively assert the existence of a personal or universal creator, of immortality, or even of survival after death; the Buddhist doctrine of causality is indeed incompatible with an absolute in philosophy and a personal God in religion.

There is good reason, therefore, for separating Buddhism from its fellow-religions and for the statement of one of its adherents that it 'concerns itself only with the facts of life, and not in the least with the unknown.' We are faced with the extraordinary fact that a religion which flooded the Far East and counts

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five hundred million believers, accepts nothing on trust and without inquiry, and discards or tolerates with a sceptical and equivocal smile every supernatural element whatever. For the philosophical structure of Buddhism depends upon the natural order, upon the actualities than can be observed, and not upon transcendental phenomena. The causes and immense extent of its diffusion become problems, therefore, of the greatest perplexity.

The doctrine of causality is at the root of the Buddhist belief in an impersonal, eternal, cosmic, natural order. While other religions base their appeal on the unchanging and immortal substance of the soul, the concern of Buddhism is with mutability. The logic of Gautama recognized two realities in space and time, the mind and the material universe. Of the mind he wrote, 'The mind is the origin of all that is; it is the mind that commands; it is the substance to the shadow, and makes its own dwelling-place' — which is pre-Milton. Mind, consciousness and external universe are all subject to the same laws of causation and temporality. Thus the order of things, the norm or Dhamma, is conceived to be in a continuous flux, a becoming and a passing away, a position not very dissimilar from that adopted by Hume and Heraclitus. As Mrs. Rhys Davids remarks in her penetrating study, *Buddhism*, the Buddhist view of phenomena resembles that of our own logic book, that every event is the result or sequel of some previous event or events, without which it could not have happened, and which, being present, causes it to take place.

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It can be seen at a glance how radically such a view of the evolution and continuity of the natural order departed from the 'animistic' and mythological data of Brahmanism and the older cults from which it was constructed. Gautama never actually denied the existence of Indra, Brahma, Siva, Vishnu; his method was more dexterously subversive. The gods might well have their being, but it was within, not outside, the world order, and as subject to its inexorable laws of antecedents and consequences as men and plants and animals. Deity received an honorary degree, but its controlling and administrative functions became obsolete. Gods or no gods, the sowing and the reaping went on. As the Buddhist seer, Buddhaghosa, taught, the cosmos was without maker, without known beginning, continuing to exist by virtue of a concatenation of cause and effect. There are no rewards and punishments in Buddhism; there is simply the law of cause and effect. There is no interference from supernatural agencies; for as the Dhammapada declared, 'All that we are is the result of what we have thought.' Pain and happiness have nothing to do with the wrath or benignity of the gods, but are the inevitable results of man's own ignorance or of the emancipation of his own nature. The Absolute, the First Cause, disappears, for there is nothing permanent in the universe but change, and effects cannot differ in nature from their causes; while morality lies not in illusions, threats, promises or bribes, but in the discovery of, and fidelity to, realities.

Buddhism, so bold and unique among religions in its examination of natural laws, so apparently nihilistic

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in its philosophic conclusions, yet possesses, or once possessed, an ethical content far superior to that of Brahmanism. Brahmanism was a mythology without a religion, Buddhism a religion without a mythology. But Buddhism differs strongly from Christianity in stressing the phenomenon of pain, not sin, as the root of all evil. To get rid of pain was the real problem of existence, and this concept was interwoven with moral ideas on the one hand, and with the natural sequences of cause and effect on the other.

To what extent the Buddhist doctrine of re-incarnations before and after this life can be associated with the founder, it is difficult to estimate. What is quite certain is that impermanence and causality underlay the whole Buddhist theory of morality. The ineluctable consequences of evil-doing in this or a previous existence (Buddhism is no clearer as to what evil-doing is, nor whether it is absolute or conditioned by circumstance, than any other religion) are pain and misery, whether they be ultimate or immediate. There is nothing good or bad but the result shows it to be so. Therefore, no individual can be said to be static; not merely from reincarnation to reincarnation, nor from year to year, but from day to day. He is growing or decaying all the time, and mental and emotional states in no wise differ in this respect from the curves of continuity in plant life.¹ In other words, the individual

¹ When this doctrine is applied *biologically* to the history of human society, it can have and has had, as I have tried to show elsewhere in the book, the most fatal results. Human society is not an evolutionary machine,

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is constant only in his evolution, and the laws of growth incident to the natural order apply with the same inevitability to the moral order. In studying Buddhism, one cannot fail to be struck by its attempt to reconcile the organic processes of nature with human and ethical valuations, a movement of thought which is largely ignored in Mohammedanism and Christianity, and operates in the reverse direction in Brahmanism and kindred religions, in which nature is anthropomorphized.

This brings us into contact with the Buddhist attitude to the individual. Both the casual and close reader of books on Buddhism must realize that since the cardinal aim of the Buddhist philosophy is individual perfection, it lays an emphasis upon personality shared by no other religion. Buddhist thought is enshrined in the heart of man. It was a faith depending on no authority or divine revelation: it eschewed dogmas and the delegation of one's own reason, whether to priest or law or institution. It enthroned intellectual enlightenment. It made the acquisition of knowledge, both spiritual and mental, a supreme object, and thus widely departed from the Christian's 'He that increases knowledge increases sorrow,' and Newman's 'Avoid inquiry which leads into the deep pit.' Its idea of faith was truth to convictions, and the certainty of finding truth. Its test of discipleship was the capacity of each individual to work out his own salvation without extraneous aid. For the elaborate rituals and magical practices of the cults by which it was surrounded, it substituted self-conquest and self-culture. Every man was his own architect and

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saviour, and personal enlightenment was essential to salvation. The idea of a corporate Church is, indeed, in extreme contradiction to the Buddhist notion of the good life – the growth of one's own inner nature resulting from one's own exertions. 'Morality,' said the early Buddhist, 'has its birth in the individual's need,' and the root of what is most precious in life is 'instinctive love.' Scores of the sayings of Gautama point in the same direction: 'By oneself evil is done; by oneself one suffers; by oneself one is purified'; 'Strenuousness is the path of immortality, sloth the path of death'; and, 'Be ye lamps unto yourselves. Betake yourself to no external refuge. Hold fast to the truth as to a lamp.'

It is indeed obvious that a religion which holds tenets such as these is as individualistic as it could well be, and the whole basis of its morality is subjective. No priesthood, no ceremony, no supernatural machinery could interpret truth to man nor lead him to it. He could achieve nothing without living Shakespeare's 'To thine own self be true'; a set of commandments compiled by any authority outside himself, divine or human, was valueless, and the real difference between men lay in the degrees of zeal they devoted to the cultivation of the spirit within them.

ITS DENIAL OF THE SOUL

It is sufficiently remarkable that a personal gospel so uncompromising as this, so much in harmony with the outposts of modern thought rather than average opinion, should have succeeded in distributing itself among the

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mass millions of Asia, from India to Japan. But it is far stranger when we consider the fact that this most individualistic of religions illogically denounced the idea of the individual soul, regarding the existence of a spiritual self as a pernicious heresy. Such a doctrine affected not merely the belief in the soul, prevalent in India under the title of Atmanism, but that security in the prolongation of life after death as an individual entity which is the keystone of all religions, from that of ancient Egypt to modern Protestantism. To the Buddhist the mind and consciousness were not 'soul,' but a form of 'electrical' energy aroused by suitable stimuli. The concept of the immutability of an immortal essence was impossible to a creed which believed that psychical processes followed the same law of change as organic ones, and that the ego was but a temporary combination of five constituents, grouped together and functioning as 'a being drawing thoughtful breath' from the consequences of its past actions. There is no such thing as an ego, said the Buddhist, just as there is no such thing as a chariot, which is a mode of expression for axle, wheel, pole and so forth, in a certain relation to one another. This ego is merely a complex of co-ordinated sensations, ideas, thoughts, emotions and volitions, not an entity in itself; and death sets in motion a new grouping of elements founded upon the series of actions, good or bad, which made up the personality during life. Thus the Buddhist, who insisted upon the inwardness of truth and salvation as alone of any value, abolished the indwelling spirit itself as a fiction.

Not that the Buddhist denied all continuity after

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death. "Those who are in earnest do not die," said Gautama. He said no more than that when a person dies, the elements of his personality no longer occur in their customary mode of association. But the content of the ego was not lost because, by the law of spiritual evolution, the accomplishments of this life pass on to the potentialities of the next. The person is not an integration, but the living embodiment of past activities, and he alone can be truly happy who realizes that life and death are one.

The greatest confusion as to the meaning of Nirvana prevails among the interpretations of Buddhism, some holding it to represent the attainment of perfect love and the perfection of all human excellencies, others annihilation through growth, whatever that may mean. But it is possible that the confusion exists in the very nature of Buddhism, which draws so very subtle and narrow a line between the belief in the individual and the negation of the individual spirit. It becomes, in fact, absolutely incredible that such philosophic niceties could have been diffused over so wide an area of the earth's surface, and a wise writer has pointed out that Gautama himself evaded the question as to whether Nirvana meant extinction or completion, and that while the initiated appreciated the distinction between one's karmic self and one's identical ego in survival after death, the founder relied upon the simple appeal of humanity and the 'divinity of love' itself for spreading the gospel among the multitude. It is indeed the elasticity of Buddhism which is one of the main clues to the problem of its distribution.

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ITS PESSIMISM

The question of how Buddhism came to be so much more than the movement of a few reformers is aggravated when we turn to what so many Western writers have entitled its 'pessimism.' Undoubtedly, this element has been exaggerated. The qualitative ideal of Buddhism necessarily rejected all that machinery of the after-life which has dazzled, comforted and occupied the religious votaries of Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism and the older cults of the immortality of the dead. There were no golden stairs nor marble palaces in Buddhism; there was no propitiation of powerless deities, no assurance that the sorrows of this world would be compensated by infinitude of splendour in the next. The fact, again, that Gautama definitely turned his back upon the theory and practice of self-mortification as a means of coercing gifts from deity, has not received its due attention. The sacrificial tendency of Brahmanism elevated asceticism into so important an article of religious observance that it became practically identified with piety, and led incidentally to the subjection of women, the handmaidens of luxury, among other of its pronouncedly sadistic abuses. But Gautama escaped the Indian trap of asceticism, declaring that 'mortifications are painful, vain and profitless,' and that no wisdom came to him as the result of his austerities. Current thought in India was indeed too strong for him, but it is at least noteworthy that, to the early Buddhist, asceticism and purity of heart were not interchangeable terms.

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Nevertheless, the Buddhist concentration upon pain and suffering, combined with the overwhelming pressure of the morbid asceticism prevalent in India during the fifth century B.C., and the Buddhist repudiation of all adventitious aids to salvation, did develop a certain pessimism of attitude in Buddhist thought. The 'Four Great Truths' of Buddhism are that pain is co-extensive with existence; that the cause of pain is the desire of life; that freedom from pain can only be achieved by abandoning desire; and that the 'Noble Eightfold Path,' a somewhat vague set of moral generalizations, is the means to this end. Though life on earth is a weariness, said the Buddhist, and there are no hopes of bliss beyond it, still it is possible to be pure, loving and wise. But there can be no doubt that we have here struck contact with the fundamental abnormality of Buddhism, its one fanaticism and bigotry – the sense of the intolerableness of life. To Professor Leuba's words, 'Not God, but life, more life, a larger, more satisfying life, is, in the last analysis, the end of religion,' the Buddhist would reply that all is vanity and vexation of spirit. Thus one of the activities of the Buddhist monk was 'the contemplation of decaying objects,' while the concept of Nirvana as a condition in which the fires of passion and illusion were extinguished, if not a universal view, is always present. It is a melancholy, vegetating faith which teaches that man is doomed to a heavy pilgrimage of reincarnations throughout creation, and that freedom from passion and the play of the senses is the way of truth. A more positive and kindling gospel would surely find that men are unhappy,

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not because they are alive, but because they are not. And we may point to the irrationality of a faith which, although so wedded to rational thinking, and based in doctrine on the truths of nature, frowns upon the exercise and enjoyment of those parts and faculties given by, and expressed in, nature. The Buddhist here stopped short of his own logic and science, since he failed to see that the exclusion of sex meant its dominance, and that suppression produced those very excesses which Buddhism deprecated. It is damaging comment on the religious (in the technical sense) attitude of mind that it nearly always confuses the thing in itself with part of its effects, denouncing as radically ugly what is only so if isolated and misused.

Buddhism, at any rate, did evolve the rejection of life as one of its cardinal beliefs, and that is the cause of its reputation for pessimism. But this just conclusion has been carried too far. It must be remembered that Gautama declared that he followed the middle path between asceticism and the pursuit of pleasure, and regarded the mortification of all desire as 'a mere madness'; that the aim of the Buddhist was inward harmony; that he showed wisdom and not intolerance in asserting that happiness was not to be attained by direct seeking; and that he insisted again and again upon the 'emancipation of the heart through love' as the greatest of all virtues. Lastly, it must be repeated that he reserved the logical pessimism of his philosophy for the 'intellectuals.' We have indeed to assume that one of the causes for the spread of Buddhism was that its doctrine of rejection was either ignored by, or its

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implications unknown to, the vast majority of people among whom it held sway. For it is an undoubted fact that the diffusion of Buddhism was a 'triumph of gladness,' a progress of good tidings, and that the followers of Buddha, more especially in Burma, are the cheerfulest folk in Asia.

ITS CONFLICT WITH AUTHORITY

Another factor which makes for surprise in comparing the actual tenets of Buddhism with its wide distribution is its iconoclasm. The subversiveness of Buddhism is implicit rather than cut and dried, but is none the less profound, far-reaching and, when the date of its founder is taken into consideration, absolutely original. The path to happiness in India had been an intricate ritual of magic in which the common people took no interest, and a life-long torture of asceticism. Both these elements were in the hands of a highly organized priesthood. But Gautama taught that 'He that is pure in heart is the true priest, not he that knows the Veda.' A gospel that exalted the spirit over the letter cut right across the formalisms of priestly despotism and privilege. The Buddhist believed that rites and external observances were sham supports that obscured the path to righteousness, 'even when there is the right spirit within.' If bathing in the Ganges confers merit, then fish are higher than men. The whole idea of a priesthood with mystical powers was repugnant to Buddhism, as was the idea of a path to salvation by means of esoteric passports and abracadabra. 'Love and purity' were the vade-mecum;

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not caste, ceremony, asceticism, magic, formalism and ancestor worship. The caste system, inseparable from Indian ritualism, was equally attacked by the Buddhist view that truth could be attained by all, regardless of birth or sex. The subjection of women was countered by the fact that they could enter the Sangha or Order of Monks with the same status as men, a great heterodoxy in India. Gautama himself made no difference whatever between men and women.

The Buddhist, again, raised his voice against sacrifice from two aspects: in the first place, by his emphasis upon inward piety as opposed to externals, and, in the second, by his professions of humanity to animal life. He was opposed to miracles on the ground of causality, for technical miracles are by their nature without an originating cause. His scientific spirit, fused with his religious principles, expressly denied the religious value of authority, and preached devotion to truth as the antidote to tradition and prejudice. And for an Indian religion to 'deny asceticism, gods and the soul is no mean departure,' says one of the Buddhist writers. Further, the teaching of Gautama forbade war. 'No soldier could be a fervent Buddhist,' writes another authority; 'no nation of Buddhists could be good soldiers; for not only does Buddhism not inculcate bravery, but it does not inculcate obedience.' Another writer points to its contempt for wealth, and its opposition to the notion that great possessions provide work and well-being for others, on the ground that such living consumes the common wealth. The wealthy, said Gautama, are slaves to their wealth, while the poor man

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is free. The Buddhist's ideas of equality, brotherhood and sympathy, combined with his opposition to ritual, also made common cause against the priestly and military aristocracies of India. The following translation from one of the sacred books of Buddhism marks an even more remarkable heresy: —

‘The general system of our trade is a system of selfishness and is opposed to the high sentiments of human nature. It is a system of distrust, concealment, and of taking, not giving, advantage, a sequestration from the sentiments of generosity and love. Nay, the evil custom reaches into the whole institution of property, until our laws which protect it have become the issue of selfishness, not of love and reason.’

We need add no further data to illustrate the iconoclasm of Buddhism, which probably only escaped the fate of a great many other heresies by the indirect, implied and unaggressive nature of its teaching. It was the custom of Gautama not to denounce, but to propose alternatives. Better than ritual or authoritarianism, he would say, is so and so. Buddhism escaped destruction by its persuasive methods, and thus we reach the conclusion that the radical heterodoxy of Buddhism did not prevent its spread, because it operated as a great liberating force.

ITS DYNAMIC FORCE

We shall see later that this actually was so, and in the meantime we have to consider that the objections

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already put forward to the spread of Buddhism have their reverse side. The history of man reveals clearly enough that he has not been a reasonable being; but the essentials of his human nature have been so overlaid by the craziness and arbitrariness of many of his institutions that a gospel which ignores institutions and appeals directly to human nature may well prove a spreading flame of inspiration, and so something much more than a system of thought congenial to the philosophic mind. It has to be remembered that Buddhism was expressly a missionary and democratic movement, and that its object was to 'release men from the bondage of the law by the freedom of a high and humane moral code.' Whatever difference of opinion may be held concerning the validity of the idea of universal brotherhood, there can at least be no doubt that it is a dynamic idea, a live and moving force among men; and the Buddhist based this equality upon nature, which endows all men with the same organs, appearance and birth. All men were admitted to the Sangha except soldiers, minors, slaves, invalids and cripples. The doctrine of spiritual freedom must have been attractive to the Indian masses, bound in the rigidity of the caste system.

Allied to such a faith was the compassionateness of Buddhism. 'Go ye,' said Gautama to his disciples, 'out of compassion for the world,' and this compassion was extended to the animal kingdom, the provision of animal hospitals being one of the most noteworthy practical effects of Buddhism. The very fact that peace, goodwill and love are almost the commonest words in

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any language is the best evidence of their power to move multitudes; and Gautama's appeal to 'instinctive love' could be understood well enough by people who had hearts, if not minds, in common. A teaching which made free men of slaves and a brotherhood of classes; which opposed individual truth to theological, popular righteousness to lifeless and academic dogmas, the sense of community to hereditary priesthood, the spirit from within to the unintelligible dictates of gods and institutions, inquiry to authority, and the realities of life to system, was bound to exert its influence far and wide, provided it was not crushed at its inception. And Buddhism escaped that, as I have already remarked, partly by its tolerant attitude and general benignity; partly by its attempt to understand the causes and consequences of things, a causality which was one of its principal articles of faith; and partly by what may be called its philosophy of replacement. It was the method of the Buddhist not to curse the barren fig-tree, but to grow a living one in its stead. The Buddhist tolerance was, indeed, so great that, while plainly one of the most potent causes of the diffusion of Buddhism, it ultimately proved its undoing by degenerating into a surrender of principle that left little or nothing of its original force.

The Buddhist insistence, again, on the freedom of the individual, on obedience to inner convictions, not external prescription, combined with its strong denunciations of lying ('Love the truth even to martyrdom'), must have afforded an outlet for liberality of thought not given by the stifling, exclusive systems by which it was surrounded. Ideas, no less than customs,

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have a self-distributive power. Sayings like, 'There is no suffering of the mind for him who has thrown off his fetters'; 'Better than lordship over all worlds is the reward of entering the stream of truth'; 'Let us live happily, and though we call nothing our own, we shall be like bright gods, feeding on happiness,' possess an emotional mobility which in itself is a cause of diffusion. Lastly, we have to reckon with the genius and personality of the founder. It is indisputable that Gautama possessed in a superlative degree that personal magnetism and sheer enlightened goodness which are more powerful than argument in winning converts. It has been well said of him that no man was more godless and godlike. He preached love and was strength; and these, as Wordsworth would say, are 'great allies.' Thus we have already gathered a few generalisations to account for the spread of Buddhism—the conditions of its teaching, the beauty and humanity of its gospel, its elevation of the individual human being, its wide tolerance and ideas of equality, and the personal influence of its founder. But these elements are still but a partial explanation.

2

A consultation of the more prominent authorities on Buddhism reveals the fact that they nearly all ask the same question. What was the cause of its wide diffusion? asks one. Whence, asks another, came its jubilant missionary spirit, when self-dependence, not an organized salvation agency from without, was the core of its doctrine? Buddhism, as a third writer justly points out,

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sought no more than to give a tentative explanation of the nature of man and his relation to the world around him. How is it, he adds, that a religion which ignores the existence of God and denies the existence of the soul has found most acceptance by man?

A FIRE AMONG MILLIONS

‘How,’ writes Max Muller, ‘a religion which taught the annihilation of all existence, of all individuality and personality as the highest object of all endeavours, could have laid hold of the minds of human beings, and how, at the same time, by enforcing the duties of morality, justice and kindness, it could have exercised a decidedly beneficial effect not only upon the natives of India, but on the lowest barbarians of Central Asia, is a riddle which no one has been able to solve.’

It will be apparent, if what we have already written has any validity, that not only has Max Muller overstated the nihilistic side of Buddhism, but that a partial explanation of its spread lies in those very elements which he and other writers find so antagonistic to conversion. But surely the principal answer must be sought in the actual historical perspective of Buddhist expansion, and it is when we come to take measure of that that we find the real answer to lie in the combination of contradictions. Buddhism won the Far East both by the inspiration and the abrogation of its principles. But before mapping the distribution of Buddhism and

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illustrating its effects upon foreign peoples, it will be necessary to devote a few sentences to the machinery of its propagation.

This was the monkish fraternity of the Sangha, for it is a remarkable fact that though the faith owed much of its dissemination to the efforts of influential monarchs like Asoka and Kanishka, it has been far less associated with conquest than Christianity or Mohammedanism. The Sangha approached much nearer to bodies like the Franciscans than to a priesthood, beginning as a brotherhood of wandering hermits, begging from door to door and preaching in the market-place, and ending, a hundred years after the death of Gautama, as a well-organized community. It was to the Sangha that the East owed the proliferation of architecture in the sowing of viharas, stupas and pagodas over thousands of miles of territory, and it was the monasteries which served as nuclei for the rich and varied intellectual life of the period. These monastery-universities showed a striking power of development, variation and adjustment when the Buddhist tides began to overpour the boundaries of India. Gautama himself sent out sixty missionaries, and these led an eremitic or solitary life like his own. In time, the eremitic habit became cenobitic, and a hall with cells round it replaced the vihara or hermitage of one cell. The retreat from the annual rains became a fixed residence which threw out colonies or avasas to which wandering mendicants congregated, drawing up codes of laws, making hymns and fables, committing the sayings of the Buddha to writing, and entering upon philosophic discussions and speculations, which, in the

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period of monastic vitality, gave ample scope for original thought. When the rains ceased, the Bhikkus or brothers went forth and exchanged ideas at wayside rest-houses and meeting-places, carrying their mental furniture back to the avasas.

It has been pointed out that the transition from eremite to cenobite in the Buddhist communities was exactly paralleled by the process of evolution in the Christian monachism of Egypt. The constitution of the avasas was directly democratic, being based upon universal suffrage and the republican form of government, with a representative president lacking paramount authority. All the members of the community were on the same footing in their constitutional rights and privileges. It has been suggested that the origin of the Sangha is derived, not from the Brahman ascetic, but from the Aryan Sramana peripatetic. Whatever the origin of the Sangha communities, there can be no doubt that this spiritual band of thinkers, which developed into organized assemblies with very extensive interlinkages, proved a great civilizing and propagandist force in the carriage of Buddhism to foreign lands. The zeal and simplicity of the Bhikkus, their disregard of rank and possessions, coupled with intellectual alertness and receptivity, and the glorified fame of Gautama, were the leaven.

The dispersion of Buddhism began in Gautama's lifetime, when the doctrine, inscribed on a golden tablet, was sent by a king in Behar to another in Kashmir. Gautama himself, a native of southern Nepal (he was born in 560 B.C.), converted the kings of Magadha and

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Kosala, and Further India was gradually won by missions from the centres in north-east India. But the fountain-head of Buddhist diffusion in India itself was the Emperor Asoka, who, from his capital at Patna on the Ganges at the end of the fourth century B.C., extended his empire from the toe of the Deccan to the valley of Kashmir. Yet Asoka was only the throne, not the power behind it, for his instrument of conversion was the Sangha. The second kingly Buddhist of note was the Scythian Kanishka, who ruled from Kabul to the Hindu-Kush and the Balor mountains; in Yarkand and Khokan, in Kashmir, Lodak and the central Himalayas; and over the whole of the Punjab to Rajputana, Gujerat, Sindh and the plain of the upper Ganges. At the opening of the Christian era, Buddhism was the State religion of north-west India. The highly organized power of Brahmanism was undoubtedly one of the causes for the rapid decline and final extinction of Buddhism in India in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. But it is possible that its spread by the imperial agency of kings in northern India was a contributive cause: in the first place, because Buddhism became correlative with short-lived empires there; and secondly, because it was not by the nature of its doctrine at home in courts. At any rate when Buddhism split into the Mahayana or Great Vehicle and Hinayana or Little Vehicle, the northern version was by far the most adulterated.

In the sixth and seventh centuries A.D., Buddhism was rapidly disintegrating in northern India, and between 400 and 648, all we hear of Buddhism in India

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is derived from the Chinese pilgrims, Fa Hian, Sung Yun and Hiouen Thoang. In the eighth and ninth centuries, Indian Buddhism had become so corrupt that when Islam conquered Kashmir in the twelfth century, there were hardly any Buddhists left in India except semi-Jainists. The reaction against Buddhism had indeed begun upon the collapse of Asoka's empire, when the Brahmans reasserted themselves and began a bloody persecution. Buddhism still prevails in Burma, but in India, apart, of course, from Ceylon, it is to-day only found among the Mongolian races in the parts of the Himalayas bordering upon Tibet, and then in a very debased form.

ITS ADULTERATION

It is when we look into the nature of the associations between Buddhism and its fellow-religions of India that we at once see a principal and ironical cause for its power of expansion — its capacity for compromise and assimilation — a capacity which also led to its final eclipse. As one writer naïvely expresses it, it was the anti-doctrinal elements that gave Buddhism breadth and suppleness to comprehend theism and atheism, monism and dualism, polytheism and pantheism, fetishism and animism, gods and demons, saints and heroes, worlds above and worlds below, heaven and hell. We have only to take a cursory glance at the Indian temples to recognize the lavish extent of Buddhist hospitality to the ideas and systems of theology with which its principles were in direct opposition. There can be no

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question but that Buddhism gave a tremendous impulse to art in India; and the appreciation of beauty, so long as it was not the physical beauty to which religions are invariably hostile, was richly welcomed by the Buddhists as a means to self-culture. Buddhism only ceased to be a reigning influence when it became completely formalized; and India certainly owed her development in architecture, sculpture, painting, engraving, science, literature and medicine to the Buddhists, particularly in the Golden Age of Asoka (263 B.C.), an inspiration which did not spend its force until the sixth and seventh centuries A.D. The pre-Aryan colonists of India were, of course, stone-builders, but stone-building on a large scale was not executed until Asoka's time. He himself was responsible for the erection of eighty-four thousand stupas or religious pagodas in different parts of his wide realm.

Evidently the doors of the Buddhist sanctuary of ideas have been opened wide. We see Buddhism associated with the worship of Siva and other female deities who gathered into their receptive persons all the very worst and cruellest elements of popular Brahmanism. In the temple on the Island of Gharipouri, in the Bay of Bengal, images of the Buddha, Siva, Vishnu, Brahma, Ganesa and Indra all appear together in the friendliest *rapprochement*. The makara, or dragon of the East, is depicted on the Asoka reliefs, and Gautama is constantly represented as seated on his lotus throne supported by the Nagas or deified serpent kings of the pre-Aryan religion of India. The ancient gods were indeed transformed into avatars of the

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Buddha, and the man who dispensed with gods became the mightiest divinity of the East. The figures of Gautama were even animated by magical rites like the portrait statues of ancient Egypt. The famous Bo-Tree under which Gautama received enlightenment became an object of adoration, like the trees which were worshipped as the repositories of deity and deified ancestors in the Eastern Mediterranean many centuries before Gautama. The giant footsteps of Buddha were worshipped on the way to Ceylon; and it is superfluous to point out that such adoration was antagonistic to the elementary principles of Buddhism.

The life of Buddha was in like manner stuffed with supernaturalism. Signs and portents accompanied his miraculous birth, and he entered his mother's womb in the form of a white elephant. Flocks of wonders accompanied him in his stern pilgrimage towards truth, and lent their aid in all his mental and spiritual difficulties. When he meditated, the serpent king spread his cobra hood over him, and it was Brahma, and no inward compulsion to alleviate the lot of mankind, that persuaded him to disclose the truths he had acquired in solitude and contemplation.

The cause of the decline of Buddhism in India was not, in fact, persecution – which more often knits together than disintegrates a faith – but its excessive compromise with other more commonplace philosophies and religions. The margin of difference between Buddhism and its opposition gradually faded until geographical diffusion became identical with spiritual adulteration, and the old gods regained their ascendancy

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under new names and in new suits of clothes. The pessimism attaching to a faith distinguished by so much beauty and insight assuredly lies in the dispersion of its integrity together with its culture, rather than in the original tenets of that culture. Numerous writers, as we have seen, have expressed astonishment at the spread of so intellectual and refined a religion; but our surprise is considerably lessened when we discover that, in India at any rate, Buddhism, in its true inwardness, hardly spread at all.

On the other hand, it did leave its mark even in a country notorious for the formality, gloom and standardization of its religious thought. The people as a whole breathed a freer air, the position of women was improved, the gods in Buddhist dress were less savage and stiff, and a spirit of greater humanity became manifest in custom and institution. These two mechanisms of diffusion constantly repeat themselves in varying degrees of intensity in every country of the East that took the seed of Buddhism – its tendency to evaporate as a ghost of itself, in other words its over-adaptability; and its usually meliorative, humanizing, enlightening effects in an indirect and general manner upon the people and social organisms with which it came into contact. Perhaps it was the fear of life which set up a certain debility in the mental constitution of Buddhism.

WHAT HAPPENED ABROAD

The conversion of Kashmir and Ceylon to Buddhism took place during the reign of Asoka, and was extremely rapid. Asoka sent his own son to convert the Sinhalese

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king, and the oldest Buddhist inscription (235 B.C.) dates from the time of King Tissa, the first Buddhist King of Ceylon, while a bas-relief on the gateway to the Sanchi Tope bears Asoka's crest. Such a mission must have been equivalent to a royal command; but the influence of the Buddhist commentator on the Pali texts, Buddhaghosa, was very marked upon the better educated people, with the result that the caste system was modified, the position of women became less burdensome, and a great literary and artistic revival accompanied these reforms. Buddhaghosa's *Path of Purity* maintained the same type of Buddhism as in India, and its hold, as was invariably the case in foreign countries, proved much more tenacious than it was in India. In 1901 there were still 7331 Brethren of the Order in Ceylon. But Buddhism entirely failed to eradicate the 'animism' it found in possession and which still survives; the same incongruous blend of Buddhism and Brahmanism appeared in Ceylon as in India, and a flood-tide of the magical and miraculous made a little island of the originally pure faith of the Sangha brothers. Though the authorities often contradict one another in estimating the effects of the spread of Buddhism, there is a general agreement that no independence of thought manifested itself as the consequence of the conversion of Ceylon.

Though Khotan, Bhutan, Burma and Assam are all countries within comparatively easy reach of India, they received the Buddhist gospel at widely different dates and with very different effects. The Scythian emperor Kanishka carried Buddhism into Khotan in A.D. 120;

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but Bhutan, the narrow ledge between Sikkim, Tibet and Assam, was not, at any rate officially, converted until the beginning of the seventeenth century – Bhutan was converted, not from India but Tibet, not, apparently, by missionaries, but by a Lama from South Tibet at the head of his soldiery. He established a hierarchy on the model of the Dalai Lama of Lhassa, and founded a line of priest-kings whose spirits migrated into the bodies of their successors. The Buddhism of Bhutan was, in fact, a pirated edition of Tibetan Buddhism, priest-ridden in the extreme, and heavily committed to demonism and the older ‘animistic cults.’ The monasteries and temples were of the Tibetan fashion with wooden eaves. Assam seems to have been hauled into the faith by much the same summary methods, the army of the Tai king, Hso Hkan-hpa, having dumped Buddhism upon the Naga-worshipping people of the thirteenth century. The pagodas corresponded in style with those of the Shan States and Burma. Buddhism remained the State religion for four hundred years, when the then ruler was converted to Hinduism – which can hardly have been a revolutionary event. As a symptom of the fact that the religion of Gautama in its court-dress commanded the observance rather than the hearts of the people, it began rapidly to disappear, and in 1901 there were only nine thousand Buddhists in Assam.

A LIGHT TO BURMA

The conversion of Burma, however, produced a very different effect. Asoka sent two missionaries there in

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241 B.C. But the real work was done by Buddhaghosa from Ceylon in A.D. 450, thus illustrating the curious differences in the weakness and robustness of Buddhism when diffused from India itself or from countries outside India. Though Asoka and Kanishka, the Scythian king at Peshawar, were so active in the dissemination of Buddhism, conveying it to the Tai kingdom of Nanchao and the Shan States, it withered under their fostering, and it was not until it began to decay in India that it leaped into exuberant growth in Burma. Kanishka's (56 B.C. — A.D. 28?) influence extended from the upper reaches of the Tigris to the Great Wall of China, but the Buddhism he propagated had already run to the Bhavagad-gita for support, was impregnated with the Naga cult, Siva worship, magic and witchcraft, and was riddled with superstition. All this, with devil worship thrown in, certainly got into the Shan States, and to some extent into Burma, as the Nats and other mythological elements vouch. But this deadening superstructure was lighter and more purely decorative than elsewhere, and it is indisputable that Burma preserved the original meaning, purpose and ideal of Buddhism in a form nearer to Gautama himself than any other country of the East. And in every respect it had a wonderfully kindling effect upon the Burmese, who are by far the most attractive people in the Indian Empire of the British. One out of every five Burmese can read and write, and this has been entirely due to the educative zeal of the Buddhist monastic schools. P. L. Narasau in *The Essence of Buddhism* has the following passage testifying to the æsthetic influence of Buddhism: —

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‘A tangible way in which a religion manifests its actual influence upon civilization is art. The great glory of Buddhism is that it has always ministered to the satisfaction of æsthetic aspirations. Wherever Buddhism has prevailed, artistic pagodas, vast viharas, beautiful stupas have come into existence. The finest buildings in Japan are the Buddhist temples. The beauty and charm of the frescoes of Ajanta caves serve as monumental proofs of the wonderful inspiration which the religion of the Tathagata imparted to art. . . . All sciences and arts were studied in the centres of Buddhist civilization, such as the great Buddhist monastery of Nalanda. . . . The very bloom of the intellectual life of India . . . was contemporaneous with the period in which Buddhism flourished.’

This is particularly true of Burma, whose numerous topes and pagodas were inspired by the Buddhist monks. But the most striking example of the liberating results of Burmese Buddhism, and one testified by all the authorities, are the marriage laws of Burma. Most of the Burmese women read and write, and all enjoy, or enjoyed, a complete independence both in personal conduct and the affairs of life. Marriage was a civil contract, and the wife neither changed her name nor received a ring nor head-covering. She in no way abrogated her independence with her marriage, and her husband had no control over her property. The Burmese marriage was in fact an equal partnership, terminable by either party upon many grounds, including

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'difference of temper,' or, as we call it, incompatibility. In consequence of this freedom, as one writer puts it, and in spite of it, as another holds, marriages were very rarely so terminated in Burma. The proportion of real marriages, as Jeremy Bentham once wrote, greatly preponderated over the apparent ones. There is no doubt that this interpretation of the marriage laws was entirely due to Buddhism, and was indeed its logical outcome. For Buddhism was a religion of free individuals which acknowledged no authority whatever except that of right living. The same principles ruled in other Buddhist countries to a lesser degree, even in Tibet, but it was only in Burma, whose people have been called the happiest in Asia, that they expanded into their full flower.

THE GHOST IN THE FAR EAST

The diffusion of Buddhism, which so transparently mirrors the conflict between Man and Law, produced a very different harvest in Tibet. The faith spread widely though sporadically in Central Asia. It was adopted by the migratory Turanians in the centuries following Asoka in its northern and more corrupt form; a kingdom of Bactrian Greeks in the Punjab ruled by Menander, who was a Buddhist, established contact with the more westerly parts of Asia, and Buddhist writings in Uigur character show that some of the Central Asiatic Turks were Buddhists about the eighth century A.D. Here the faith was melted into the mould of Shamanism. The northern Church not only held

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Tibet, as it did Nepal, China and Java, but established a political ascendancy there in direct opposition to the attitude of the Buddhist monks in Burma. Buddhism triumphed in Tibet from the seventh century onwards, and so has maintained the ecclesiastical hierarchy known as Lamaism for thirteen centuries. Its fusion with the pre-Buddhist Shamanism of the Bon-cult either dissolved or distorted the essential constituents of the Buddhist philosophy to such an extent that the Lamas became notorious for the exclusiveness of their oligarchy, while the Tibetans themselves have been called 'the most priest-ridden people in the world.' Amulets, charms, demonism, divinations, omens and necromancy all took on a new lease of life, and we can trace such elements as the thunderbolt, the swastika, and the elephant and solar symbolism in the Buddhism of Tibet, which had so wide a distribution in the East, long previous to the birth of Gautama. It has indeed been pointed out that Tibet and Ancient Mexico present striking analogies in their religious furniture, including the use of an elaborate calendar; while, on the other hand, Lamaism bears an outwardly strong resemblance to Romanism, a fact of some interest when we call to mind that Gautama was canonized by the Roman Catholic Church. In 1839 Father Huc, a French Lazarist priest, visited the chief seats of Buddhism in Tibet, and wrote an account of his arduous journey, in which he drew attention to 'the amazing similarity of the ideas, institutions, observances, ceremonies and ritual, and even the ecclesiastical costumes of the Tibetan Buddhists to those of his own Church' (*A*

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History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom, by A. D. White, 1920, Vol. 2, p. 380).

Nevertheless, the spirit of Buddhism was not wholly smothered, even in Tibet. The laity were undoubtedly leavened by it. The doctrines of Karma and of metempsychosis, the concept of causality, became in a naïve form part of the normal life of the people. They lent an ear to the Buddhist insistence upon tolerance and humanity in the daily offices of life, and upon tenderness to all life, and the Tibetan's demonology became milder, his spirit was elevated, and animal sacrifice was discountenanced.

The Buddhist penetration of China appears to have begun as early as the second century B.C., when eighteen missionaries crossed the border, and from thence until the seventh century A.D. scholars and pilgrims travelled to and fro laden with Buddhist literature. The way into China was by the ancient fixed route from India round the north-west corner of the Himalayas and across Eastern Turkestan. By the fourth century A.D., Buddhism had become the State religion of China, and intercourse along the trade routes between the two countries continued, with interruptions, for many centuries. During the fourth and fifth centuries, Buddhists from China went on missionary expeditions to Cochin China, Java, Formosa and Mongolia, but before then Buddhism had spread west and north from Kabul and Yashkand to Balk, Bokhara and Lake Balkash, and into China again by Ili and Kobdo. The rapidity of Buddhist expansion throughout the vast territory of China may be estimated

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from the fact that as early as A.D. 65 Buddhism was officially recognized by the Emperor Meng-ti as the third religion of the State. No doubt the fact that every caravan of traders was accompanied by a missionary (see Eitel's *Buddhism*) played a very large part both in the carriage of the faith eastward and in its communications. The White Huns of the north-west Chinese border, who were in touch with the old trade-route through Western Assam towards the valley of the Ganges, who became Buddhists, and built many stupas in India, Afghanistan and Kashmir, also acted as intermediaries of contact between Indian and Chinese Buddhism.

The great centre of Buddhism during the reign of Meng-ti was the capital, Honan-fu, and the emperor, who dreamed of a golden image of Buddha, sent a mission to India for books and news of the new gospel. Buddhist relics were brought back and stored in a temple built by Meng-ti in A.D. 71, while a *Life of Buddha*, full of portents, miracles and supernatural visitations, in which Gautama descended from heaven and was incarnated in the royal line, was translated into Chinese. In 335 the Chinese themselves took monastic vows, and the successive cargoes of sacred literature were grouped as a collection in 684. At the beginning of the Tang Dynasty (620-904) began the series of persecutions against the Buddhist monks and nuns for impoverishing the revenue by their idleness, and in 714 twelve thousand monks were compelled to adopt a secular life. In 845 the number of Buddhists had increased to 260,000; 4600 viharas and 40,000 lesser

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religious houses were destroyed by the decree of the Emperor Wu Tsung. These and other similar decrees were constantly rescinded, but Buddhism in China compromised with Confucianism without ever supplanting it; and after some centuries of rapid progress, it was so heavily beset by the Confucians as to be finally reduced to the pitiable conditions in which it remains at the present day. Confucianism reacted against Buddhism in China as Brahmanism and Sivaism did in India. But it was the central invertebracy of Buddhism itself – its contempt for life, in the first place, and its readiness (the wrong side of tolerance) to surrender its quintessential principles – which really rang its own knell. The spectacle of its adulteration and decline is one of the most tragic in human history, but it must not be forgotten that a faith so pure and enlightened had to contend in its expansion with the incalculable weight of lifeless custom, rigid authority and the unthinking power of inertia.

The story of Buddhism in China repeats our previous material with local modifications. Though there is no worship of a Supreme Being, there is worship of relics, of the sacred wheel, of trees, of the Buddha, and of stupas. The religion which refused to dogmatize upon the unknown, found itself saddled with eight different hells. From the fourth century onwards, converts in the mountains went forth to bridle dragons in order to secure the regulation of the rainfall, for, as has been pointed out elsewhere (G. Elliot Smith, *The Evolution of the Dragon*), dragons and the water supply were invariably associated in the archaic cults of East and

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West. From the earliest times, elements of Siva and Brahma worship were brought over to China by the Buddhist pilgrims. Images lent a helping hand to the seekers after salvation. The blending with Taoism and Confucianism added other incongruous elements from them both. The worship of the Goddess of Mercy who hears the cries of men, Kwan-Yen, also appears in China, and with her father, Amitabha, who resembles Mithras. Their ritual, which included the offering of flowers, incense, lamps, banners, food, invocations, recitations and repetitions, added a Western Paradise or Land of the Blest to the original concept of Nirvana. A case has been made for a connexion between Kwan-Yen and the Sabæan Goddess, Almaquah, who was introduced into Ceylon, India and Central Asia by merchants speaking Greek. According to this theory, the Kwan-Yen services were introduced from Alexandria via Southern Arabia, Socotra and India by traffickers who also visited the ports of the 'Periplus.' It is also claimed that in A.D. 50 a Buddhist patriarch introduced Syrian ritualism into Chinese Buddhism. There was also a probable interchange of ideas between the Gnostics and the Buddhists of Western India, while there can be no doubt as to the borrowings of Islam from Buddhism.

It cannot be doubted that Buddhism, of all the world religions, could least afford, by the nature of its individual and highly spiritual message, such interblendings with other and formalized religions. But in China, as elsewhere, the humanizing and purifying and civilizing influences of Buddhism left their mark. A

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goddess appears, but she is a goddess of mercy, and is revered not by blood, but by flowers. Buddhism exercised the same creative influence upon architecture, the arts and education as it did farther west; and the idea that the universal law or Dhamma existed for the benefit of all, irrespective of birth or sex, was maintained. The conciliatory open-mindedness of the faith offered the same encouragement to freedom of thought, while the monasteries set an example of ethical nobility. China, too, became indoctrinated with the philosophic idea of the unity of life through Buddhism. It is a very remarkable fact that though Buddhism is the oldest of the great religions of modern civilization, it is positively the only one which recognizes the essential unity of all creation. In Christianity, this recognition is wholly lacking, for Christianity is concerned, not with the universal or the natural order, but with mankind alone. But Buddhism attempted to reconcile and gather into a universal harmony all the phenomena of life, and this scientific idea was the basis for its doctrine of universal compassion for all living things. This doctrine has been grotesquely perverted in the East, but it unquestionably acted as a ferment, particularly in Burma and less forcibly in China, upon the narrow, mechanical and externalized systems of thought prevailing over the East at the period of its distribution.

In A.D. 372 the bonze, Sunto, carrying images and sacred texts, was sent by the King of Tshin to Korea. In 384 another bonze made his appearance, and he was followed by a procession of them fifty years later. In 551 a Buddhist was made patriarch of the kingdom, and

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various kings subsequently took the bonze robe. The bonzes intrigued, fought one another, fortified monasteries, grew fat in prosperity, and owned slaves. In 1419 Confucian opposition reduced the Buddhist Orders to two, and in 1512 these also were abolished. The spread of Buddhism to Korea, in fact, was not the propagation of an idea, but an occupation or appropriation by religious officials calling themselves Buddhists.

Buddhism was known in Japan as early as A.D. 65, but it was not until 522 that a Chinese bonze, travelling by the overland route via the Korean Peninsula, erected a Buddhist temple in Yamato. In 545 the King of Kudara, menaced by an attack, made a Buddha image sixteen feet high, and seven years later presented a copper image of the fortune-bringer to the Yamato court. Thus, early in its Japanese career, Buddhism acquired a political aspect. In 577 the King of Kudara made a second attempt to introduce Buddhism into Japan, employing for his spiritual weapons two hundred volumes of sacred literature, an ascetic, a yogi, a nun, a spell-binder, an image-maker and a temple architect. Thus the evolution of Buddhism through transmission proceeded from image-breaking to image-making. In 584 an outbreak of smallpox occurred. So the nuns were flogged, the temple was burned, and the image of the Buddha thrown into the canal by order of the Emperor Bidatsu. The plague continued, and so was ascribed to the wrath of Buddha. Consequently, the temple was rebuilt and the nuns were reinstated. In Japan, the civil officials favoured Buddhism, and the military and ecclesiastical officials opposed it. In 606, therefore, when the

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military party received a fall, Buddhism became a great social power with forty-six temples to show for it. In 642 it stopped a drought, and spread its own somewhat muddied waters more broadly in consequence. In 754 an empress was cured of a malady by a Buddhist, and henceforward emperor after emperor professed the Buddhist faith. In 743 a bronze Buddha, gilt with 870 pounds of gold, was built 53½ feet high, and from that date Buddhism and Shinto marched forward hand in hand for a thousand years. The Tendai system was introduced in the ninth century and became the parent of nearly all the important sects of Japan. By the tenth century, Buddhism had become a great militant force, distinguished by every kind of violence and extortion, while a line of soldier-priests took up the running in the fifteenth century. The monks were rich, employed soldiers, and made political intrigue their principal occupation, while their wars became notorious for their fury and mercilessness.

It will be obvious that Buddhism in Japan was a mingling of many waters. The idea that prevailed was that Shinto was the root, Confucianism the branches, and Buddhism the fruit of the tree of life. The Shinto Kami became avatars of the Buddha, while the sun-goddess herself, though taking second place to Gautama, became his incarnation. The famous Gyogi played the principal part of reconciliation between the faiths already present in Japan and the imported faith. More noteworthy is the appearance under the ægis of Buddhism of the Indian deities – Ganesa, the elephant god; Garuda, the eagle god; and Hanouman,

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the monkey god, while the cult of Siva was introduced through Buddhist literature. Thus Brahmanism, a non-proselyting religion, became transmitted as far as Japan by the agency of its deadliest enemy. The history of the diffusion of Buddhism is full of such ironies.

Buddhism, none the less, had the same leavening influence in Japan as elsewhere, though more superficially. Progress in the arts, particularly music, and in architecture was the consequence of Buddhism, which acted as the intermediary between Chinese culture and Japanese barbarism. The lacquer industry of Japan was the work of the Buddhists, while their faith became the chief incentive to knowledge. The carriers of Buddhism to the Far East were not only missionaries, but also artists, mathematicians, men of science, astronomers, wood-carvers and men of letters. In Japan, for instance, the Buddhists were the first doctors; they introduced the first windmills and the art of making Chinese paper and ink. The Japanese carpentering, painting and brickmaking of the sixth century were of Buddhist inspiration.

The southern form of Buddhism, trailing Brahmanism and 'animism' under its cloak, was introduced into Cambodia in A.D. 422, and thence into Siam in 638. Its theology was based on the compilation in Siamese of works and commentaries on the Pali canon. An intrusion of Chinese decorative art can be traced in the monastic towns with their numerous and lavish pagodas of Indian workmanship set in the midst of rich gardens. These pagodas were the centre of Siamese

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culture, while their initiation ceremonies resembled those of the first Christian communion. The Malay Peninsula received Buddhism through Burma.

The Chinese Buddhist Fa-Hian stayed five months in Java (A.D. 412), and remarked that 'various forms of error are there flourishing,' showing that Buddhism had already obtained a strong hold in Java before 400. Most of the splendid architecture and decorative art in Java flowered after the eighth century, and the temple of Boro-Budur contained four hundred images of Gautama. Sivaism possessed almost equal recognition with Buddhism, and the two religions were closely intertwined. The upper part of the sacred building of Usana, for instance, was a Buddhist shrine, while the lower was devoted to the cult of Siva. The Buddhist authors composed poems on subjects from Brahmanical lore, so that the incompatibles once more celebrated their marriage of convenience in yet another country.

It was not until far on in the seventh century that the Chinese traveller I-Tsing (671 and 688) gave the information that the King of Bhoja and the rulers of the neighbouring islands were Buddhist. Bhoja was the nucleus of Buddhist culture, but Sumatra had heard of the new religion in its Hinayanist or southern form long before this date. Between I-Tsing and the middle of the fourteenth century, when Tantrism, a corrupt form of Buddhism steeped in black magic, was prevalent, there is a blank in our knowledge of the Buddhist fortunes. In Bali, Buddhism has always been subordinate to Sivaism, even in its Tantrist form, which closely approximates to the demonist cult of Siva. The

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Tantrists revived the extremely ancient cult of ritualist immortality and so evolved a powerful priesthood.

The present extent of Buddhism embraces Mongolia, Manchuria, Korea, Japan, Tibet, China, Annam, Siam, Ceylon, Burma, Bhutan, Nepal and Formosa, chiefly in a very debilitated form, while Sumatra, Java, Bali, Luzon, Mindanao, India, Kashgar, Kashmir and the country of the Kirghiz and Kalmuck Tartars west of Southern Siberia have been lost with the decay of its intrinsic value and reality. In India itself, only the buildings and frescoes with their Persian and Greek influence remain to testify to the power of a faith which rested solely on the hearts and minds of men, and owed its diffusion equally to its success in exalting, and its failure in safeguarding, that primary ideal.

HUMAN CIVILIZATION IN NATURE

XIII

DISCOVERING DERBYSHIRE

I

MEGALITH-HUNTING appears a poor sport to the uninitiated. They fail to see that the megalith is the one truly wild quarry left in England. You can never be sure that your snipe or pintail is not a foreigner with foreign weed in his gullet; even rabbits are partial parasites on human occupation and every other form of game, even heretics, are somehow tame-tainted. Not so the megaliths of England. You must go through the Looking Glass to get them, and though our civilization descends from their builders in a plumb straight line, so do the giants, the fairies and the witches. And I will venture that no pioneer feeling his way through the glooms of Amazonian waterways or galloping into the sun over the Patagonian Plain or even exploring a Freudian patient has a more Mallory-like quest than stalking megaliths among the Derbyshire uplands.

To begin with, you get to know more of this noble county in a week than ever the hoariest of its natives. The tombs all squat on the high places and I have stood on top of a vault in the huge barrow at Minning Low, south-west of Winster, and gazed over the whale-backed ranges straddling the table-land and humping up

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towards the High Peak northward, eastward towards the wooded slopes of the Derwent Valley and south-westward towards the dales of the Dove and the Manifold – but my eye perched on never a human habitation. Minning Low is to the barrow-brood of Derbyshire what the Stone Circle of Arbor Low, a little Avebury five miles away and connected with the great tumulus by an archaic trackway, is to the other stone circles of the county – their Zeus. At Minning Low it isn't only mound mystery which hath you in thrall, nor the grove of oracular beeches which ramparts the stone monster with its thin pelt of grass. You actually are in a different dimension from life as you know it – the rural, hotel, industrial or spa-life of Derbyshire.

When the megalith-builders of what is called so meaninglessly the 'Neolithic' period crept northward from the Cotswolds on to the Derbyshire limestone, and dug themselves in hard, they colonized a land that is no longer our land. Ours, the last civilization, has never been piled upon this, the first, so that in tracking tumuli you are exploring a county within a county, both within the same geographical limits. These great tombs have been disfigured enough, but they alone in all this teeming man-made land are the guides to wild England. They have preserved their solitude, their remoteness and utter isolation for something like four thousand years, and all the mob of doings which has tunnelled, burrowed, heaped and translated English soil from then till now has left them high and dry. These antique settlements – mounds, burial-chambers and passage-ways to them,

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earthworks, stone circles, causeways, dewponds and 'gruffy-ground' (the hummocks and depressions of old lead-mining in their neighbourhood) – are as lonely to-day as the giantly ghosts still said to emerge from their underworld. They will be the only sure sanctuaries from destruction in the next war.

We have lately rediscovered the country, but still the megalith-builders have the best of it. Never were such artists in landscape. They possessed a sixth sense in planting their great halls and reception-rooms of the dead on what is not merely the longest or most varied or spacious view, but the most æsthetically composed. They were resolved that the dead in their stone chambers should not be bored with too uniform or irritated with too inchoate a panorama. They were not the men to hump a tumulus on the highest point of a range of hills. They picked their views like connoisseurs in paintings, even though their choice was strictly limited by their industrial exigencies. Megalithic architecture honours the dead in defiance of Blake's 'Drive your plough over the bones of the dead' only north of Ashbourne and south of High Peak, where the carboniferous limestone yields to millstone grit. There are hardly any barrows in the millstone grit country, in spite of its pasturage facilities, and these mounds are, I think, all late. The true ones are clustered where the yields of lead were most abundant, west of Sheffield and east of the escarpment of Axe Edge. In the triangle between Buxton, Bakewell and Ashbourne, the richest mining field in Derbyshire, the earlier megalithic barrows all have one or more old lead mines within arm's

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length. Archæological orthodoxy asserts, of course, that the 'Neolithic' people were as innocent of the knowledge of metals as the Australian aborigines are of night clubs. Their faculty then for erecting great tombs in precisely those limestone districts where lead-mining is of immemorial antiquity is a singular accident of distribution. The 'beaker-makers' of the early Bronze Age probed a little farther northward and, as on Eyam Moor where the 'Wet Withens' Circle, its epic sung, is sinking beneath the purple tide of heather, set up their open temples of stone just where the lead-lodes were most copious. But the true pioneer prospectors were their forerunners.

I visited the sites of all these earlier tombs whereof any record survives and I discovered that this strange people had sown their monuments with the nicest balance between their desires in this world and the next. Like the peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean (and especially the Cretans) during the second millennium B.C., their thoughts were leaden because of the silver lining to be extracted from the dull metal, and, like theirs too, the dead sought a living room with a view. They compromised between earth and sky-world, and as gods began by being men, so men, unburdened from the flesh, entered a half-way kingdom where, like the skylark, they were true to the kindred points of heaven and home. No hunter of the earlier megalithic tombs of Derbyshire will hesitate between the socket of the long-headed skeleton reposing within them and the eye of the bungalow speculator, when it comes to getting just the right tones and adjustments of landscape. And in

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knowledge of the anatomy, the graces, the form and pressure of this England, your megalith-hunter will have it all his own way.

The Bronze Age people who followed after had a nearer mental horizon than these finders and founders of Albion. Their barrows are smaller, the sites of them more casual and their architecture is passing from a hall of spirits to a stone-box. It is among the Derbyshire hills, that are something between downs and mountains with bits of the Dordogne massif and the Devonshirecombe thrown in, that the transition between the two periods is so beautifully outlined. Avebury or Abury and Arbor Low (the same name), Mount Silbury and Minning Low – here was the solar system of pre-historic Britain. All that came after was satellite to them.

2

Allow me to rear an earthwork of more solid materials round these generalizations. In a previous book (*Downland Man*), I maintained without any first-hand knowledge of Derbyshire that an unbroken cultural continuity rolled between the first two megalithic periods that have left their memorials upon our land. These periods, described by archæologists as the 'Neolithic' and 'Early Bronze' Ages, are almost invariably assumed by them to have been comparative strangers. The men of the long barrows came from the Mediterranean (the pundits are beginning to admit that); the men of the early round barrows from the Rhineland as conquerors. Therefore, they were as distinct as their crania indicate.

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The Neoliths were ignorant of metals and agriculture; the 'Beaker Folk' had mutated to a knowledge of both. As metallurgy and agriculture are the identity cards of civilization, the script runs that the Neoliths were savages (as usual confused with primitives) and the Beaker Folk the salad-mixers of civilization. The fact that both peoples – to mention only the salient marks of relationship – reared megalithic monuments, made polished flint implements, occupied the same localities, practised an identical cult of the dead and set up barrows and earthworks not only in the same regions but on much the same sites, is conveniently side-tracked as irrelevant. The orthodox theorists cannot indeed claim even their beaker as exclusively distinctive of the Bronze Age, since remains of four beakers, one buried with the primary interment in the West Kennet Long Barrow, the most important in England, have been discovered in 'Neolithic' deposits.

You will spend an unprofitable morning in the British Museum Reading Room if you search for modern records of megalithic Derbyshire. Yet it is in Derbyshire that these two periods flow into one another so harmoniously and with such gentle gradations that nobody but a dogmatist or a gentleman suffering from cerebral discontinuity could fail to mark their organic unity. 'In Derbyshire,' wrote Rookes Pennington (*Barrows and Bone Caves of Derbyshire*, 1877), 'no traces of any break between the Neolithic and Bronze times occur; and, if it did occur, we must suppose that both conquerors and conquered were of similar races, possessing similar customs.'

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Nor can megalithic Derbyshire be isolated from megalithic Yorkshire and Westmorland to the north, Wales to the west, and the Cotswolds to the south. Bateman in *Vestiges of the Antiquities of Derbyshire* (1848) was the first to point out that the burial chambers of Minning Low (Megalithic 1) were structurally indistinguishable from the 'dolmen' of Kit's Coty House in Kent. He also drew attention to the striking analogies between Minning Low and New Grange in Ireland with its oft-noted resemblances to the domed tumuli of Mycenæ. Both at Minning Low and Chelmorton (also Megalithic 1), the burial vaults were surrounded in the manner of the Etruscan tumuli by a dry-stone walling covered over with earth, as within the great tumulus of Belas Knap in the Cotswolds, whose eastern horned extremity carries us on to the Scottish cairns and back to the 'Giants' Graves' of Sardinia.

Derbyshire's links with Wiltshire, the centre of the megalithic complex, were numerous. A vessel in the Green Lowe 'Long Barrow,' north of Aldwark, is so like the figure represented in Vol. 1, Plate 18 of Colt Hoare's *Ancient Wiltshire* that Bateman remarks: 'Had railways then existed and communications with distant places been as easy as at the present day (1848), we should have attributed both vessels to one designer and one manufacture.' The bronze dagger figured in Vol. 1, Plate 23 of Colt Hoare is 'of a precisely similar nature, the number of rivets or studs and pins being exactly the same' as that unearthed from Net Lowe (barrow) on Alsop Moor. Vol. 1, Plate 3 and Vol. 1, Plate 34 of Colt Hoare also illustrate a necklace and a

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jet ornament bearing the closest resemblance to similar finds in Derbyshire barrows. A group of rocks with 'Druidical' associations and known as Rowtor Rocks, near the 'Druid Inn' below Stanton Moor (a very beautiful girl will serve the dog-weary pilgrim among the megaliths at this inn), bears the same name as the Cornish rocks with *their* megalithic (for that is what the unintelligible term 'Druidical' really means) memories. Likewise do Purbeck shale ornaments occur in the Derbyshire barrows.

Is this intermingling due to 'trade,' that magic and meaningless term which solves all the problems so facilely? What then of Arbor Low? The greatest stone circle of Derbyshire, south-west of Monyash, is set within a constellation of five old lead mines and is hardly less lonely than a watcher of the skies silent upon a peak in Jupiter would be as he gazed upon the vacant stellar spaces. To the east, the vast view is curiously like the billowy plateau, starred with tree clumps, of the Wiltshire Downs from Martinsell Hill near Avebury. But northward it is wilder and more desolate and the gipsy land, intersected with stone walls, slowly and aloofly mounts to the severe dorsal scarps of the higher ranges. Great pools of sun appear like mirages and are gone, and in ceremonious chase huge shadows stalk across the slopes. My very eyes were seeing that haunted land with those of megalithic man from the temple of his ancestor lords that dwelt within the stones.

Forty-six stones, all prostrate, remain to tell the tale of a vanished ritual. Avebury once had five hundred. As at Avebury, the stones (from 6 to 8 feet long and 3

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to 4 broad) were set up on the lip of a steep and broad fosse environed by an outer vallum, while a stone-trinity within forms a 'cove' similar to that within the unhewn columns of the Wiltshire monoliths. In place of the stone avenue passing from the centre of worship out towards West Kennet, a low earthwork serpentines from the stones and once joined Arbor Low with Gib Hill Barrow, the cone-tumulus 350 yards to the west of it. Nobody knows whether Arbor Low is Megalithic 1 or 2, though all the other stone circles of Derbyshire are probably of the second period. What is inferentially plain is that Arbor Low was the chick and spit of Avebury on a smaller and less ambitious scale and the ritual centre of the megalithic life of Derbyshire, just as Avebury was of that of Wiltshire and, as I have contended in another book, of all England.

The megalith-builders of Derbyshire, then, were in no sense cut off from their fellow-colonists in other megalithic areas. Provincial elements in their works did not preclude a common family relationship.

3

One of these localized individualisms was the substitution of round, or more probably conical, for long barrows. There are long barrows in Yorkshire and long barrows in the Cotswolds, but none in Derbyshire, so that the only difference between the barrows of the first and second megalithic periods there is in their *size*. Those of the second phase are smaller than those of the first. The usual practice of communal burial in the

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central chambers of the 'long' barrows, and of single in the 'cists' of the round, in some measure accounts for this. But since the earlier stone building overtops the later in breadth and grandeur of conception, just as Avebury and Arbor Low dwarf minor stone circles on the chalk downs and Midland ranges, successive burials in one mound are not the true key to this difference in size. The second period represents a falling-off in largeness of architectural design from the ambitions of the earlier one. The extension of metal-working in the 'Bronze Age' did not correspond with progress in building. How should it have done? The Beaker Folk were imitating their forerunners in their distinctive interpretation of a civilized life but introducing no fresh ideas into the common stock of inheritance. It matters not one jot that their overlords belonged to a different, broad-headed race. Culturally, the two races were almost indistinguishable and the second wave of megalith-builders was merely perpetuating the ideas and traditions and institutions of the first. Increase of population, a greater facility in the use of metal tools — these are only the adventitious marks of civilized progress. The 'Beaker' men were working on a less generous scale than their cultural predecessors, and living blindly on the past.

Take the metal argument. The earlier megalith builders are with amazing arbitrariness assumed to be ignorant of metal-working. Yet, as I have pointed out, their tombs in Derbyshire occupy all the best sites of the most prolific lead regions. Minning Low has four 'Old Lead Mines' (Ordnance Survey Map) in its

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immediate neighbourhood; Smerrill Tumulus, two; Brassington, one; Green Low, two; Bolehill, west of Bakewell, three; Monyash 'Long Barrow,' six; Taddington Five Wells, eight, and the two tumuli of Chelmorton, five. When the 'Beaker' men penetrated Derbyshire, prospecting was a soft job for them. The very skeletons of their forerunners were their signposts. A cultural ocean would have separated the two epochs had one been familiar with metals and the other not.

To identify a 'long' barrow in Derbyshire, your clue is not the shape of the mound, but the structure of the burial chamber. A long corridor roofed and walled with great slabs and tunnelling horizontally into a larger central burial vault occasionally cruciform in the Mediterranean style is the standard pattern. Sometimes this passage-way, as at Belas Knap, near Cheltenham, is constructed of drystone walling, thin rectangular plates of mortarless stone fitting with mediæval precision. Often the roofed avenue is destroyed, leaving a free-standing 'dolmen,' a giant's table with nowhere to put his knees. At Minning Low the tall ranges northward with their backs in heaven, the wild greeny-grey moors to the west, imperial in desolation, the clouds of wooded slopes to the east, cannot dethrone the majesty of the mound that commands them. Here there are five of these vaults, one of them roofed by a capstone, now broken, 11 feet long, and another by a slab 8 by $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet. There is a somewhat dubious record of one gallery, now destroyed, leading into one of the burial chambers, but there were certainly no others. For one thing the vaults are too close together to allow of them. At

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Minning Low, therefore, the passage-way was a disappearing feature of the first megalithic period.

Now come along a few miles north to Stanton Moor, a wonderful district of stone circles, Logan stones, rock-piles like Robin Hood's Stride and a Hermit's Cave where a thirteenth-century figure of Christ on the cross was carved out of the rock. Stanton Moor itself is as thick with tumuli as a plumduff with raisins, and the very landscape is bossed for miles with cones and mounds of natural formation, like the barrows of the giant race whose lore has descended to us from the megalith-builders. On this Devil's Acre of Stanton Moor, near the eerie little stone circle of the 'Nine Ladies'¹ and beside the ancient track through the heather, stands an early Bronze Age tomb with the cist fully exposed. Its resemblance to the burial chambers of Minning Low hits the eye in a moment. The capstone is retained, but the side walls of huge slabs have given place to rubble and the grave has sunk down to sandwich form, so diminished is the space between capstone and tomb floor. The Stanton Moor cist and the passageless vaults of Minning Low afford a perfect example of the continuity in transition between the funerary architecture of the earlier period and its successor, an example which dramatizes the graduated decline from an elaborate to a simpler structural style, from the use of

¹ *N.B.*—The Derbyshire stone circles all have burial associations of one kind or another, and suggest that the very form of the circle was borrowed from the "peristalith" or enclosure of stone blocks encircling the mounds of the earlier builders. In time, perhaps, this circle acquired a primary and the mound shrunk to a secondary significance:

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larger to that of smaller materials, and from a laborious to a rougher workmanship.

Seek the original home of the megalith-builders in the Mediterranean and the same process is manifest. The tidemark of structural achievement is lowered as between Crete and Mycenæ, Mycenæ and the Western Mediterranean, the Western Mediterranean and Britain. So it is between Avebury and Arbor Low, Arbor Low and the Wet Withens on Eyam Moor, and between the graves of Minning Low and those of Stanton Moor.

A lifeless traditionalism, the perpetuation of custom into a mechanical rule-of-thumb, the obedience to forms whence the indwelling spirit has departed – this is the history of the megalithic cult of the dead as it writhed its wrinkling skin along the rough surfaces of an unexplored world. That missionary cult civilized the primitive earth, and its labours carved out the groove which confined it. The spirit that informed its quests hardened into an automaton; the vehicle of civilization it drove began to run downhill until it crashed in the whirling chaos of the Iron Age. 'In science,' wrote Buckle, 'originality is the parent of discovery, and is therefore a merit; in theology, it is the parent of heresy, and is therefore a crime.'

XIV

HOLY WELLS

IT is but little appreciated that the holiness of waters is probably one of the very earliest expressions of magico-religious belief that the annals of mankind reveal. In Egypt we are on fairly sure ground in concluding that the divine powers ascribed to water synchronized with the dawn of her pre-dynastic civilization. Civilization means agriculture, and in Egypt agriculture meant the Nile, whose life-giving flood became embodied in the person of Osiris. The evidence therefore points to the precedence of water-worship over sun-worship, which does not appear in full blaze until the fifth dynasty and its line of solar kings. It certainly preceded the cults of stones and trees and other natural objects which were evolved from the cult of the dead. Holy water appears to have been among the first objects of worship to occupy the thoughts of experimenting men in that strange mingling of biology, magic, passion for life, and the instinct for self-preservation which is the key to early religion. Just as the cult of water springs from this primordial source, so it became universally adopted among the religions of all nations. By Mexican spring or Scottish loch the celebrants practised the same rites of sprinklings and washings, of lustration, baptism, libation and purification, and persuaded themselves that

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they obtained to their satisfaction the same concrete or mystical results.

There are holy wells and sacred springs, pools and rivers, wishing, healing and divining waters distributed all over Britain, though they are found more particularly in those regions of Scotland, Ireland, Wales and Cornwall where the Iberians and their successors established their megalithic cults. Even in London there are survivals of sacred wells. St. Bride's Well survives in Bridewell, now covered by a pump, and there were wells at Kilburn, as a stone inscription in the High Road indicates, while the site of Holywell Street recalls a spring venerated by the Canterbury pilgrims.

In approaching all the innumerable legends, superstitions and traditions associated with the holy wells and sacred waters of the British Isles, we have to drill down into strata reaching far below the record of early Christendom with which the worship of the waters is chiefly identified. This we know not merely by the survival of a vast and confused crop of beliefs which have a purely pagan origin, but by the substitution of saints and early missionaries for the spirits, goddesses, pixies, boggarts, kelpies, boggles, demon water-steeds and water-bulls, mermaids, web-footed banshees, dragons, giants and witches connected with wells, whom they dispossessed. The axiom of the continuity of sacred sites is paralleled by the transference of attributes from water-sprite to water-saint, from mother goddess to Virgin Mary. The saints, like the witches, possessed the power of allaying storms, and

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St. Tegla at her well in Wales had a black cock sacrificed to her, as had the goddess who reigned before her. The fairies donned the hood of the holy man; the chapel by the well was built of the stones of the magic circle that went before it; the flood of beliefs rolled on from paganism to Christianity, barely losing a bucketful of its sacred contents.

One of the distinguishing marks of archaic religion is tree-and-stone worship. I hyphenate them because they were to all intents interchangeable. In Crete and the ancient Eaſt, both tree and betylic (bethel) stone were the abodes of divinity. Now the holy well or spring goes inseparably with tree and stone. Osiris was at once the Nile and the sycamore; in Arabia, well and stone had a dual divinity; in Palestine, the pillar by the well was the Lord of the Covenant; and in Persia, the re-animating Soma Tree was planted by the Well of Life. In the New World, the stone or cypress tree was related to the spring or fountain as the right hand is to the left. Among the Celts, and in Scandinavia, Brittany, Spain and Britain, menhirs, dolmens and other megaliths were raised beside rivers and linked in holiness with waters. The Celts prayed for rain to the menhirs beside springs, wells and fords. Both in geography and in tradition this association is found all over Britain, so that beside the crumbling stones of some Cornish holy well with its mating tree or stone, we visualize the Tree of Life, Yggdrasil (the ash), with its three fountains under its three roots, and the Tree of Life in Paradise, where four streams issued at the fountain of life. As in Revelations, the Tree of Life and

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the Water of Life go together in a kinship as close as heart with blood.

The older folklorists saw in this association the male principle (the tree-home of the sky-being) in unity with the female principle (the water-tent of the earth-goddess), but it is best to see them both more generally as the dual conductors and repositories of the life principle.

As late as 1018 the worship of trees and wells in combination had to be prohibited – of course in vain. For centuries afterwards the sick gathered nine stones from the Holy Pool of Strathfillan, in Perthshire, the Scottish Bethesda, three times circled three cairns hard by, and deposited a stone at each for an offering. Here is a remarkable illustration of the intercommunion between the cults of the sun, of the dead, of stones and the life-giving water. Sufferers were healed at Three TreeWell, near Glasgow; the stone in St. Martin's Well, Liskeard, assisted childbirth, as did Hathor, the Divine Cow, in Egypt, while at well after well in Cornwall the charm stones in the water had curative powers. Millstones represented Thor, and to this day rags are hung (once an almost universal custom in the world) on the thorn of Madron Well, in Cornwall – a survival and more humane form of human sacrifice. Tree offerings of tin and iron were hung beside St. Thomas's Well, near Glasgow, as representatives of the parts of the body healed by it, and some springs possessed the power of petrifying erring human beings, as the megaliths of the ancient mariners were in themselves stone forms of the resurrected dead. Thus closely is the cult of the

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well linked with that of the megalith-builders, who were among the colonizers of early Britain.

In Northumberland, Staffordshire and other counties we find holy wells bound geographically to earthworks, and the well cult tied traditionally to the high places. At the dawn of English civilization, when the megalith-builders discovered Britain, our southern downs became cult centres like the mound of Heliopolis, Mount Meru in Nubia, Sinai and Mount Juktas in Crete. The divine power that gave a new life to the ailing who bathed in the sacred pool was likewise manifested on the heights. It is important to bear in mind that the medicinal qualities of so many healing wells scattered over the country had originally nothing whatever to do with their mineral properties. The waters were a nostrum for all diseases not because of their salts, but their divinity, and they were divine because they were life-giving, while the ritual accompanying both doctoring and purification or baptism was the same – the entering, literally and spiritually, upon a new life. Healing wells were not physicians, but miracle workers, and this we can also see from their greater potency, their fuller measure of life-giving, on days of pagan festival and Christian celebration – Easter, May (the time of new life), Lammas and All Hallows.

It was during these festivals, particularly on the first three Wednesdays of May, that visits to holy, wishing, divining and healing wells were made with pomp, ceremony and rejoicing. May was the chosen time of baptism, and the baptismal water was taken from the sacred well to the font.

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At the May Day rites by the Giant's Cave Well in Cumberland, miracle plays were performed, and many of the Cornish wells (Zennor, St. Neot's, Chapel Uny, Madron, etc.) betray relics of ancient sacrificial customs derived from the rituals of regeneration and resurrection in May, when a king was sacrificed as the god of the New Year, and afterwards a human substitute for the king, and afterwards an animal. Finally, fruits and flowers were offered, a traditional feast still surviving in 'well-dressing.' So in some counties the maypole and Morris dancing was performed at holy wells. The original meaning of these ceremonies and revels was to recharge the waters with their life-giving powers.

The same thought is dimly manifest in the offerings made to sacred wells. Abraham set aside seven ewe lambs after digging a well, and Horace dedicated a kid with flowers to his Bandusian fount. But the archaic idea of renewing the vitality of the waters was gradually transformed and 'rationalized,' partly by a change in the nature of the offerings and partly by a narrowing of the functions of the waters themselves. Where once they were reservoirs of life they became tellers of fortunes, healers of skin diseases, granters of wishes, augurers of the future, and love philtres. All manner of gifts, though each with a magical pedigree, were offered them – cheeses, wheaten cakes, coins, bent pins, clothing and 'elf-bolts' – that is, pre-historic flint implements dropped into the water to cure cattle. The clothing reminds us of the hair and nail-parings of the sick which were offered in Scotland, and no doubt represented the living man himself. The dropping of coins into wells

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recalls Charon's fee for crossing the Styx, and the depositing of small pieces of money in dead men's mouths in China and elsewhere was a kind of life insurance for resurrection and rebirth. Still more significant was the substitution of quartz pebbles for pins at Lix Well, near Oban. The distribution of quartz as a life-giver and symbol of re-animation, and as the most cherished portion of the medicine man's furniture, is world-wide.

Both festivals and votive offerings reveal innumerable clues to the ancient solar cult of these islands. The angel who troubled the waters at Bethesda was the Christianized embodiment of the older sun-god, and the practice of circling holy wells thrice or three times three, either against the sun (widdershins, a Scottish word derived from the Icelandic 'vithra,' against; 'sins,' movement) or with it (diessul), of dipping thrice at sunrise and other similar customs, carry us back to the great solar religions of the ancient East. The symbolism of white and red, closely associated with well-worship in the same way, recalls the white and red of Egypt's dual crown. Lastly, the powers of wells in rain-making, of which there are many British examples, are identical with the similar powers of the divine Pharaohs, of the dragons which were always linked with water, of the deified chiefs of many a savage tribe, and of the antique solar 'culture heroes' – Merlin in England, Quetzalcoatl in Mexico, Hercules, Theseus, Cadmus and others on and around the Ægean coast.

We cannot, of course, be certain of the geographical source of the well cult. All we can say is that it appears

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in Egypt before 4000 B.C., in the deification of the Nile, whose amenable flood taught the pre-dynastic Egyptians to irrigate their fields. But whatever the geographical origin of well worship, we can be in no doubt as to the original signification of the sacred waters. They were regarded as the primeval source of life, the magical repositories of the life substance. He who bathed in or drank of them was not merely restored; he was reborn.

But the hardest thing in all this world is to unlearn what the past has taught us. That is rebirth indeed.

ENGLAND LAID WASTE

THE face of England has been moulded by the social changes of English history, every wrinkle, every fold, almost its expression, as the human spirit and sometimes even the human face divine, by the vicissitudes of its experience of life. For æons after the last retreat of the glaciers England as we know her remained in her wild babyhood – forest, desert and the bare summits of the higher hills, while palæolithic man made no impression whatever upon her features. But with the coming of the megalith-builders, England received her first transformation at the hand of man. It is a remarkable tribute to the first civilization that laid the foundation stones of the English nation that it left English country actually more beautiful than it found her. On the chalk downs, the granite moors, the open heaths and limestone uplands, the large gestures of Iberian and Armenoid after him positively refashioned the contours of the hills into their earthworks, tombs and agricultural terraces. They added a new dignity to Nature without departing from the harmonious graces of her downland and so permanently kneaded them into continuity with human history. The literalism of their religious beliefs caused them to select for the shrines of their dead lords those sites which demanded the greatest stretch of landscape,

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with the consequence that we ourselves in a civilization which has dealt less scrupulously with the qualities of English scenery cannot secure an uninterrupted view of down, heath or hill-top occupied by the men of the megaliths without the eye being arrested by their labours in earth or stone.

Not only do these monuments take hold of and dominate the scene below them, but themselves catch in smaller compass the rhythmic curves and folds into which so serenely flow the lines of the downs. What would Stonehenge be without Salisbury Plain, and even more pertinently what would Salisbury Plain be without Stonehenge? All the visible landscape from Stonehenge belongs to the ancient temple of the sun, as the circumference to the hub of a wheel. A long barrow on the downs is a toy down in itself, while the great pyramidal hill of Silbury, near Avebury, has become Nature's but for a certain stamp of apartness in its form. Nor would it be true to say that these monuments, adding fuller lines to Nature, have gathered beauty because they are half as old as time. The centuries whose procession has passed over them have altered them little more than have the winds. Where they were once white they are now green — that is all.

The Celts, Romans and Saxons introduced much less significant changes in our landscape than the national vanity of our text-books will admit. The Celts had very little to say for themselves except Arms and the Man; both for burial and ceremony they mainly used the monuments they found here, while they undertook no fresh adventures into the forested plains. The Roman

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settlements were an exploitation rather than colonization, and the poor relics of their handiwork in comparison with that of the megalith-builders reveal their anxiety to get what they could out of the land rather than to enrich it. Many of their military roads were but a straightening out of the megalithic trackways, and here Nature had more work to do in softening their rigidity. Nor can straight roads, as the modern motor road so vilely demonstrates, ever become familiar with English landscape. It was the twisty, curly lanes and highways of the Middle Ages which made England more truly and variously herself. They, like the pre-historic greenways before them, established the principle of the winding corner that so exactly tallies with the shy, evanescent revelations of English country beauty. The share of the Saxons in maturing the configuration of the land has been grossly exaggerated through the political partisanship of Freeman and Froude. The Saxons were lowlanders who made small clearings by the sides of streams; but whether for weal or woe of landscape beauty, their small islanded homesteads can have made little more impression upon the length and breadth of English swamp and forest than has the rubber settlement in the Amazonian jungle to-day. Possibly their strip system of cultivation caused parts of the valleys to look like the striated vineyard patches in the southern plains of France. There is no comparison between these horizontal ribbons and the generous corn platforms of the megalith-builders.

The age of the tower and the keep was followed by that of the monastery and the cathedral. The first period

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accentuated that appearance of concentrating upon specific points of land which was characteristic of megalithic England, while the second dotted the wild with rich gardens. The cathedrals gathered townships about them and the abbey and the monastery set the style for the English country house with its park, lake and spinney abutting on the wilderness. The landscape gardening movement in the eighteenth century greatly artificialized the process. Such changes as the drainage of the fens, the clearance of the forests, the demarcation of common lands, the growth of cultivation extending ultimately (as in Cobbett's time) even to the tops of the downs, and the establishment of the yeomanry, proceeded in a continuous development from the Middle Ages onwards without being seriously or for long periods interrupted by the wars of the nobility, the Black Death, or the tragedies of social oppression which make our history only less bloody than its complementary prototypes. The face of England was changing, but so slowly that only great leaps of time would have marked the closer and closer intermingling of the eternal rhythm of Nature with the works of man.

A precipitous and revolutionary change was, however, dumped upon England by the enclosing of the common land in the nineteenth century. But the irregularity of freehold system, both in time and in extent, is not so well recognized. Hurstbourne in the Hampshire highlands, for instance, was for long years the king's land. From him it passed to the Tarrant Monastery in Dorset, and was then acquired by a family who leased it to a current profiteer. He it was who began extensive

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enclosures of a country whose varieties of ownership had hitherto been followed by no remoulding of its essential outlines. It might be asked why English country means principally hedges enclosing meadow land and French country still retains its open, boundless plains, though the process of the seizure of the common lands was the same in both. The answer is that the enclosures in England were inaugurated by rich men on a large scale, whereas the French Revolution consolidated the peasantry in the possession of their land. The enclosures bore far more heavily upon the richer yeomanry of England than upon the peasant proprietors of France.

Up to the industrial revolution, man's relations with Nature were in effect those of a co-operative partnership in a mutual interchange not perhaps of goodwill on either side but certainly of benefits. Even the wanton expropriation of the enclosure system did no harm to Mother Earth, only her labouring sons. But with the coming of the Railway Age, followed in furious sequence by the Motor and the Bungaloid Age of to-day, these bonds of communication were abruptly broken, and Englishmen began to impose themselves on the English countryside in the spirit of conquering aliens. The beginnings of the decline of agriculture corresponded with the pimpling of the north with industrial cities. Thistle and factory together combined to invade agricultural England in precisely the same way as Puritanism and promiscuity have made an alliance of opposites to destroy the conception of romantic love. The great wave of industrial development is already spending its

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force in the north and has begun to roll its sooty waters south, as industrialized towns like Reading and Oxford clearly warn us.

Other multifarious consequences of man's industrial mood of conquest over Nature have manifested themselves in all directions. The mongrel suburb has destroyed the particularity of division between town and country, in which each, living side by side, was true to itself. The oak, the beech, the lime and the elm, which shared their individualities between human tradition and natural nobility, are being replaced by the monotony of disciplined conifers, as standardized as the commercial mentality which has ordained them. The harsh lines of the quarry obliterate the green rollers of the downs. The motor road, inhuman, unnatural and altogether relentless, drives like a ram through the countryside with as much regard for its forms and design as a hot poker drawn over a carpet. Its great scars across the face of England lead us towards what Professor G. M. Trevelyan calls 'the mechanized landscape of the future.' The old roads, often buttressed with primrosed banks, and so truly modelled to the country qualities on either side of them, give way to these great tar tracks with their concrete borders, rows of equidistant trees, metal vomit of petrol stations and bellowing advertisements. The builder riots through the land like a skin disease, spilling scarlet hutments all over Salisbury Plain, making fungus pleasure towns sprout over the turf solitudes of the downs, putting up red brick in the stone countries. The old woods are grubbed up — Harewood Forest,

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the scene of W. H. Hudson's romance, *Dead Man's Plack*, disappeared during the War – and the starveling wire fence evolves in the march of civilization from the hedge with all its prodigalities of life, colour, form and line. It is a melancholy and ironic reflection that the wide distribution for the first time in history of a real love for the country should correspond with a period in which enlightened bodies like the National Trust have to wrest inches of untouched England from the devouring grasp of Progress.

Yet as the horde of speculators, company promoters, advertisement agents, country-house builders, bungaloiders, signposters, petrol-pumpers, river-polluters and all the motley caterers of profit and pleasure erupts in lava streams over the land, it should be possible to detect some method or guiding principle in the madness.

Let me take some particular examples of the way Englishmen are dealing with England and try to gather from them where or what is the heart of the malady. The street outside my house is planted with lime-trees. Every year, therefore, the servants of the Urban District Council assemble with their abhorred shears and proceed to cut down their twigging to the very bone. When the trees are leafless, they look like the next morning after a concentrated air-bombardment upon my particular street the night before. When a starveling leafage bashfully appears, these forlorn trees only lack plate-glass in front of them to resemble a shop-window exhibition of a more than usually nauseous decorated wallpaper. Since the last thing that would ever occur to my local government would be to plant wayfaring trees, hawthorns,

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rowans or other arborescent diminutives, it is local government itself which in this respect makes the Town Planning Act the dead letter Professor Abercrombie admits it to be. Or take the Forestry Commission. This worthy body is setting an example of beneficent industry by turning the unique Breckland of south-west Norfolk into a parade ground for conifers, equidistant, each the spit of its brother and all of them set out in standardized rows as though the voice of Nature had just bawled 'Attention!' The Commission is going to do the same for the New Forest. In its zeal for making profitable citizens of natural heaths and woodlands, this Government institution has an eye for pitching on the only two landscapes of their kind left over from the unkempt England of the past. And the Brighton Town Council that has made itself recently notorious – its Tories, Liberals and Labour men combined to plot part of the English downland near the Devil's Dyke under a dirt-track for bet-upon and bellowing motorcyclists. This unabashedly dissolute scheme for ravaging the downs, for making a profit out of them by pandering to mob excitements, was the plan of a local authority who no doubt take the utmost moral pride in defending Brighton from any breaches in decorum.

These direct examples of the prostitution of English beauty by the official 'protectors of our natural rights' might be tediously multiplied. What of the indirect? The small voices in the wilderness know that one of the worst offenders against natural beauty is the military aerodrome. This is one of the warts that has pimpled Stonehenge so that the spirits who anciently inhabited

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its monoliths have every opportunity of witnessing, as the first parents of English civilization, the developments of progress between Stonehenge as it was and as it is. It has taken thirty-five centuries to transform Stonehenge from a severely formal temple into what looks like a shell-dump clustered about with military hutments, kiosk and the lump called an aerodrome. In the same way the War Office has been degrading the desert of the Dorset Downs into its own special style of desolation. The bungalow speculator is, of course, if not the most predatory, the most mischievous beast in the whole Zoo of beauty-devourers, because he runs up his shoddy contraptions in those places more blest by natural graces than others. All he cares about is that his dupes should have a wide space of country to look at from his building blot, regardless of the fact that the wide space has in consequence to look upon his idea of making money. But can any sane observer of the progressive defilement of England by this torrent of ignoble building conceive that it could have run such a Philistine rig over the land if government, whether local or central, were not an accessory after the fact? The whole principle of modern government is the protection and encouragement of commercial enterprise. All vested interests come automatically under its wing; for it to protect our natural rights against the spoliators would be for it to spill its own blood-stream upon the ground.

Precisely the same argument applies to such different species of dragon as the polite modern country-house and the vulgar advertisement hoarding which howls its

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cheapjack wares along every important road and railway line throughout the kingdom. The builder of what Mr. Williams-Ellis ¹ calls 'the large-scale Private Paradise' with its recrudescence of a quasi-feudal mannerism, its heavy unproductiveness and Fat-Boy powers of consumption, is nine times out of ten one who retires from business loaded with national favours and can satisfy his abnormally developed power instinct in old age by buying up a tract of land for his private enjoyment. Is authority to interfere with him when he has been one of its right-hand men and private property is its Bible?

It is necessary to stress this large element in the disfigurement of England, because the prevailing idea is that it is the ordinary citizen with his litter, his destruction of wild flowers, his charabanc parties, his carelessness in setting fire to heaths and so on who is the vilest sinner. But it is not he who sins against the light; it is the exploiter who makes a good thing out of his reaction against the mean and heartless environment of the Victorian industrial town and a natural love of natural beauty perverted by ignorance, bad education and that mob-mindedness which is rapidly becoming the right term for modern democracy. It is not he who is making the fair face of England like a 'whelked and bubukled' hag's, but the whole machinery of acquisitive industrialism, inherited and expanded from the Victorian Age and backed by Government authority. The ravisher with a bank balance is protected by the State, accommodated by the banks, approved by his humbler fellows and tolerated by the Churches, while the apathy

¹ In that robust jeremiad called *England and the Octopus*.

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of the universities and the clergy is because they too have their fingers in the pie of vested interests. Practically the entire labour of saving bits of England from the English forces that are destroying her loveliness has been done by individuals making a fuss and forming themselves into societies. In spite of their efforts and the mass of goodwill behind them, it is not only legal but respectable to make a Candide of England. We hate to see it, but so do the villagers below disapprove of the lava stream flowing down upon their homes from the crater. That crater is Victorian industrialism, which generated specialized factory production, the growth of the industrial hugger-mugger town and the impersonal joint-stock company that made it possible. Mr. Williams-Ellis in the book referred to above gives three ultimate causes for the rape of the countryside – a monstrously swollen population, the drift from agriculture to industry and the development of improved locomotion. All these must be referred back to the last century: these are the processes which have started the ball rolling in the opposite direction, and the ‘refugees flying from our intolerable towns.’ Officialdom cannot help Englishmen to save England from the marauders, because it is too deeply committed to and involved in a process, a force, blind and cumulative, which can only exhaust itself with the ebb of industrialism itself.

I met that force face to face one week-end when I went down to Stratford-on-Avon. It was once known as the birthplace of Shakespeare, the nurse of his country imagination and the sanctuary of the last span beyond the tempest of Blackfriars. But we have

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changed all that, except that Stratford-on-Avon still remains a sanctuary from Blackfriars (and Birmingham). Only nowadays the sanctuary seekers bring Blackfriars and Birmingham along too, with the canned salmon and the paper bags of sandwiches. Arden too has struggled through the centuries. It is called Arden Street, and you come plump on it from the station, a street of ghosts so villainous that their purgatory is to contemplate the most hideous of the works of man. Otherwise you fail to grasp the fact that Stratford is the consecrated home of the greatest poet the world has ever known.

Not that Stratford does not remain illustrious. It would be a queer thing if such a town were to drop a stitch in its continuity of making history. In the second millennium B.C., the megalith-builders spun their greenways northerly from the Wiltshire Downs and northeasterly from the limestone Mendips across the Cotswolds to Rollright, where on a hill that seems between heaven and the valleys they praised the dead in stone that never dies. They pondered much on the way and left behind on half the hills of Cotswold their chambered tombs of stone roofed with earth shaped like sculptured lions in the curve of melancholy repose. They are still there, these thoughts of eternal things dwelling in the perpetuity of stone, and possibly they will go on for a few years longer until not a star-gazing hill nor secret wood is missed by the brand-new gods of to-day, who do not bother about the hereafter. After them came the Celts and the Romans and the Saxons, Stratfordians all or thereabouts, who took up the ancient tale and tagged on new meanings, embroideries, refrains and editorials

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to it, some of them tortuous enough, others with very little ear for poetry. But all of them conned the time-stained text, inclined indeed to play the sedulous ape, and all of them were getting ready for Stratford.

Then came the middle people out of a very rough passage through chaos and old night, who made all the difference between Alauna and Alcester, Corinium and Cirencester. The brooding rage for perpetuity got hold of them in a perfect transport and their stone ideas became incarnate in Gloucester, Warwick, Tewkesbury, Oxford, and those little gardens of flower perpetuals whose aroma we breathe in uttering Chipping Campden, Stow-in-the-Wold and Bourton-on-the-Water. The hills and dales fostered them, for they in their way kept meditating how beauty shall not pass away. They, like the builders of the megaliths and the Abbey of Tewkesbury, were occupied with that renewal and re-animation which should say no to life and beauty being abducted in the mere speed-hogging of time. Lastly, Shakespeare and Stratford, his chrysalis of oaken beams, and he proceeded to do on paper what all the others, hills and woods and vanished men, had been doing in stone and the imperishable grass of the field.

Yes, Stratford is still momentous; it is still engaged in making a name for itself. It is a mighty junction of tarred roads between Leamington, Birmingham, Warwick and Banbury. The arterial roads lead from Stratford to these places and from these places to Stratford. Stratford has grown tired of all this re-animation and perpetuity cult and outworn superstition, and it prefers instead to live in and for the passing moment. The still

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life of Stratford to-day is really the petrol pump, red as a challenge to the thoughts of the past, which shall renew themselves no more.

And so the motor-cars rush to and fro in an ecstasy of everlasting motion like the waves of an angry sea that know no shore to break upon and be at rest. But it is the simile that breaks down, for there is nothing in the works of nature or dead man which can be compared with this wild demonish surge of metal along the Stratford roads. At one in the morning there was a lull, a kind of breather for the exhausted functioning of the metallic nature, while the earth fell into a fearful silence that hummed and faintly hissed with the emanations of the machines. At three in the morning the wheel-engines summoned their human satellites and the incomprehensible rotary furore began anew, gathering a cyclonic force as the heavy-eyed dawn tottered like a spavined servitor over the horizon with its light to lighten the revels of rush and roar. The machines panted, burred, squealed, growled, clashed, blared, fumed, grunted and bellowed along the roads in a cacophony of sound so appalling that the shocked senses gave up all resistance to them and became mesmerized, like the brain behind the eyes gazing into a whirling crystal. The male and female Valkyrie on motor-cycles, ritually garbed like the priests of West African fetishes or Aztec rain-gods, served their gods with that abstract visionary assiduity which caused the quaking, shining, revolving idols they rode to fulminate with stentorian laughter, huge Pantagruelian guffaws from epileptics of steel! One's bruised eye and ear grovelled to them; one

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longed to hurl oneself into the glittering torrent, to shake the personality out of one like a dog his showers of water, to become diffused and absorbed in the current of screaming metal, passing opposite ways in concentric rings in a fierce parody of cosmic wheelings. It seemed better to lose all cognition or separable consciousness in the dance of metal, because if one retained it, each car left the road and flew up like a mailed fly into one's head.

By a wrench one tore oneself away from the devouring enchantment and hid oneself like a mutilated coney in the wood. The wind wailed for the world's racket and the uncanny trees gazed heavenward with what was it, indifference, resignation or an other-world wisdom which did not even hear the jangled world as we progressive humans have made it?

Where were they going, all the machines, what were they going for and why did they persist in going with dreadful triumphant fatalism? One knew the answer at once; they were going because they were going. They were just goers, and this ferment and urge of motion was as a snake swallowing its own tail. The rushing metal sped to live and lived to speed and the end was as the beginning. The passing moment was all.

Will Shakespeare, do you think you can scare us with your blasted heath, your murdered-ghost world, your misanthropic cave, your fey forests where *silent* trip the feet of elves? Why, a blasted heath (where there were no roads) is beyond our conception altogether. We cannot imagine it any more than even you could have imagined us. Our very dreams are rounded with a noise and our

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harsh ghosts no longer walk like mists. They make a sound like the gear-box when you miss getting into third.

Yes, what is laying England waste is a force of cause and effect, an awful determinism. The Industrial Age has really to reach its flood-tide before English country can be truly rescued, and until this is reached her lovers are Canute on the shore. Obviously the ebb is at hand, but until it becomes more perceptible, what is going to be left of our hills, heaths and meadows? Palliatives can collect a few fragments of England much as the oologist collects egg-shells. But England can only be saved from Englishmen by what is known as a change of heart, and that isn't coming until the Victorian heritage is worked out. The immediate hope of to-day is twofold. Love of the country is no longer the prerogative of poets, and has indeed so inundated the general run of people that it is partly responsible for rural desecration. People are in the stage of killing the thing they love, but loving is a progressive emotion. Secondly, in spite of official whitewashing, the law of libel, the herd-mind, the filching of individual liberty, the mechanization of life and the confusion and muddle of our times, we have learned, possibly through our very disillusionments, a new candour and frankness which delight to call a spade a spade and is indeed too prone to call it a b——y shovel.

And for the future? If there be another Great War, grass will camp in the cities and the problem will be settled much as it was in Richard Jefferies's *After London*. If not, the growing self-consciousness and

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self-expression of local communities acted upon by individual spirits and the bedrock humanity of the English people will assert themselves to counteract the official and commercial Philistinism which is violating the beauty of England. This is certain, but they will be almost powerless until the machine of progress has run its mad race. Behind them will press a new generation which will have learned in its schools to bring together once more those parted lovers, beauty and usefulness.

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